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# Workshop Report: "The Future of ROK Navy-US Navy Cooperation"

*Michael McDevitt*

Center for  
Strategic  
Studies



20080108170



The Center for Strategic Studies is a division of The CNA Corporation (CNAC). The Center combines, in one organizational entity, analyses of security policy, regional analyses, studies of politicalmilitary issues, and strategic and force assessment work. Such a center allows CNAC to join the global community of centers for strategic studies and share perspectives on major security issues that affect nations.

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Approved for distribution:

October 2007



Michael A. McDevitt  
Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.)  
Vice President  
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## **Final Report: “The Future of ROK Navy–US Navy Cooperation”**

**A Conference Co-Sponsored by the  
Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy (KIMS)  
and the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA)  
21–22 June 2007**

### **Background**

This conference was the first in a series of collaborative events between CNA and KIMS. The primary objective of the series is to assist in improving the working relationship between the US Navy and the Republic of Korea Navy. The concept is to provide a Track II venue where retired and serving officers from both navies, along with civilian experts, can meet in a scholarly/unofficial atmosphere that permits a candid exchange of views on strategic outlooks and shared interests associated with the maritime domain.

This conference was a specific deliverable associated with the CNA project entitled “Asset Utilization and Shaping,” sponsored by Commander Fleet Forces Command in the FY-05 CNA Annual Plan. This task to explore ROKN-USN cooperation is in support of Commander Pacific Fleet. Establishing a relationship with maritime/defense oriented ROK think-tanks was undertaken at the express request of then Pacific Fleet Commander Admiral Gary Roughead.

### **The conference agenda**

The agenda, a copy of which is attached to this report, was designed to meet two objectives: first, to have US experts, mainly retired US naval officers who are pursuing second careers in fields related to naval strategy and East Asia security, make presentations on topics of interest to the ROK participants; and, second, to elicit presentations from the Koreans that would help to inform the US participants on long-term ROK thinking regarding maritime strategy. The ROK participants produced three papers, which are attached. The combination of workshop discussions and the papers are the basis for the comments in this report. US presentations are also included.

Since KIMS is headed by former ROK CNO Admiral An, who attended the conference, the agenda was also designed to include retired former PACFLT commanders, in order to bring their unique perspective to discussions of past efforts at ROKN-USN cooperation.

## **Major judgements, based on Korean participants' comments and presentations**

### **Participants did not want wartime OPCON of ROK forces to return to the ROK.**

The KIMS delegation, which included three retired admirals, was unanimous in opposing the planned return of wartime OPCON to the ROK. This was in spite of the fact that both the US and ROK Presidents had agreed upon the shift and that the US and ROK were already scheduled to formalize the return of wartime OPCON and the concomitant stand-down of CFC in the year 2012. (Subsequent to the conference, a formal agreement was concluded on 29 June 2007; the ROK CJCS signed for the ROK, and General Bell, Commander USFK, signed for the United States.)

The Korean participants' view is that so long as North Korea remains a credible threat to the ROK it would be a mistake to undo the unity of command embodied in today's Combined Forces Command. Today, in the naval realm, Commander Seventh Fleet is designated Combined Naval Forces Commander in case of conflict. That would apparently change following the disestablishment of CFC, currently planned to take place in 2012. After that date COMSEVENTHFLT would act "in support of" an ROK commander in case of war in Korea. The mechanics of this evolution are under discussion between the commanders of ROKFLT and Seventh Fleet today.

Sorting out the particulars of who is assigned to what role in the myriad missions associated with the defense of Korea is a task that will occupy the Seventh Fleet and ROK Fleet staffs over the next 3–5 years in the run up to the wartime OPCON shift.

Though it is too soon to tell for certain, this appears to be a return to the era that existed before 1993. In 1993, the Pacific Commander (Admiral Larson) officially agreed that COMSEVENTHFLT would formally plan for and act as CFC's naval component commander. This decision was greatly influenced by the difficult command arrangement the USN had experienced 2 years earlier, during Operation Desert Storm.

Meanwhile, the retired ROKN flags are hoping that next year's presidential election in the ROK will return a new administration that will either roll back the OPCON decision or, at a minimum, "freeze" further progress toward implementation until the threat of war with North Korea is verifiably removed. It is not entirely clear whether the Koreans who share this view understand that attempting to undo an agreement between the governments which has broad support in the Pentagon is likely to create bumps in the overall US-ROK security relationship. It is unlikely that OSD will want to unwind its decision to let the ROK have the lead in a war on the peninsula while the United States assumes a supporting role—something the OPCON decision facilitates.

### **SLOCs are important to ROK strategic thinkers.**

Since the end of the Cold War, US naval officers and maritime strategists have not needed to spend much time thinking about SLOCs per se. This is very different from the



Cold War era, when determining how to secure the trans-Atlantic SLOC dominated much of the US Navy's strategic and force-structure planning. Today, SLOC defense is a "lesser-included" benefit provided by forward-deployed naval forces. The concept of credible peacetime presence in East Asia and the Middle East has subsumed post-Cold War SLOC protection missions.

Something very different is taking place in Korea. The Government of South Korea, led by the ROKN, has "discovered" the importance of SLOCs. The government has come to appreciate that in the era of globalized economies, the ROK is a virtual island country. Today, the ROK is the world's 11<sup>th</sup> largest economy and 10<sup>th</sup> largest trading nation. Foreign trade represents approximately 70 percent of its 2006 GDP, and, according to one ROK presentation, "a whopping 99.7% of South Korea's trade is conducted via sea routes." Some 100 percent of its crude oil, 90 percent of its raw steel, and 73 percent of its food come via ship. In the words of one presentation, "It is no exaggeration to say that protection of South Korea's SLOCs is a life and death issue for the Republic."

According to the ROKN's *Glossary of the Terms of Maritime Strategy*, the ROKN has identified four major SLOCs. As described by an ROK paper presented at the conference, these are as follows:

- **The Korea-China Sea Lane** directly connects the two countries' major ports. China is now South Korea's "four number ones" in terms of economic activity: (1) largest trading partner, (2) largest export market, (3) largest trade-surplus source, and (4) top outbound investment destination. As a result, Koreans conclude that the importance of this sea lane is certain to grow in the foreseeable future. According to the Korean presentation, however, the sea lane also is plagued by illegal activities, maritime incidents, and disputed claims.
- **The Southwest Sea Lane** reaches as far as the Middle East, Europe, and Africa, via the East and South China Seas. This is the major "oil SLOC." Again, the Korean presenter characterized this sea lane as one known for chokepoints (Taiwan, Bashi, and Malacca Straits), territorial disputes (South China Sea), and piracy. In Korea, some commentators have argued that because of the oil SLOC's importance to Korea, naval forces may be required to operate as far away as the Middle East. (The presenter was skeptical that this would be a genuine requirement, but the ongoing deployments of the JMSDF to the Gulf region do indicate the possibility of out-of- area ROKN operations in the future.)
- **The Southeast Sea Lane** crosses the Pacific. It passes south of Japan and Hawaii, and goes to North and South America. Not only is it a traditional commercial route to the United States and Latin America; it also would be the critical passage for US forces should a war or contingency take place in the Korean AOR.
- **The Korea-Japan Sea Lane** directly links the two countries for commercial and wartime purposes. In particular, this sea lane would have a direct bearing on ROK-US sustainability in case of war. It connects the "rear-area support" that comes from US bases in Japan to the peninsula.



While Seoul's willingness to continue to invest in "navy building" is based on a number of factors, it seems clear that the issue of SLOC defense is a compelling argument, given the ROK's dependence on maritime commerce for its economic health.

**The ROKN is well along the path of transitioning from a homeland defense navy to a navy that can "secure national interests on the high seas" (as a retired ROKN vice admiral defined a blue-water regional navy).**

The ROK Navy is involved in a task that is very difficult strategically. It still has to be prepared to deal with the very real threat from the North while also preparing for a future in which the North Korean threat is no longer an issue. It has to do both simultaneously in the context of a South Korean military culture traditionally focused on ground warfare.

The ROKN's evolution from a small force primarily dedicated to protecting the nation's territorial waters and islands, to a force that also has regional ambitions, started in the early 1990s with the decision to create a submarine force. The way this decision was implemented has become the template for broader ROK "navy building." The concept is to either procure or build a few smaller, less sophisticated ships, and then regularly acquire increasingly capable ships. For example, three small coastal 150-ton submarines were procured from Germany in the late 1980s. Three Type 209 submarines built in Germany followed these boats, and they, in turn, were followed by Korean-built boats. Today, 15 years later, the ROK Navy has ten Type 209 submarines and is building three new, bigger, and more capable, Type 214 boats. The first of these, with AIP, was launched in June 2006.

The ROKN is also planning for a next-generation submarine, with a "highly advanced propulsion" plant and a "strategic land attack capability." As one paper said, if Korea could build such a ship independently, having a "strategic deterrent capability" would be "a dream come true." (It was not clear whether this meant nuclear powered.)

The ROK's surface navy has grown inexorably as well. In the late 1990s, the three ships in the KDX I (3,200-ton) destroyer class was followed by six KDX II (4,500-ton) destroyers. Today, the ROKN is building world-class guided missile equipped destroyers: the 7,000-ton KDX IIIs, equipped with the AEGIS combat system. The first of this class was launched in May 2007. A new class of next-generation frigates is also planned.

The strategic vision for the new regional ROK Navy was outlined in March 2001 when then-President Kim Dae-jung said that South Korea would create a new "strategic mobile fleet" consisting of destroyers, submarines, and anti-submarine aircraft. In a speech before graduating midshipmen at the Korea Naval Academy in the southeastern port city of Chinhae, President Kim said, "We will soon have a strategic mobile fleet that protects state interests in the five big oceans and plays a role of keeping peace in the world."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Cited in [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ROK/navy.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ROK/navy.htm).



All the “pieces” of this mobile force are programmed to be in place by around 2020. The centerpiece will be a class of large amphibious ships (LPH). This is a 14,000-ton ship that can carry some 750 Korean marines, landing craft, and upwards of 10 helicopters. It is the perfect ship for responding to crises and supporting UN-endorsed peacekeeping operations. It also will enable the ROK to respond to the natural disasters that regularly plague East Asia.

At the conference, the ROK participants talked about three “task flotillas,” one of which would always be on patrol south of Cheju Island. (A glance at the map suggests that such an operating area would cover the entrance to the Korea Strait, the SLOCs into the Yellow Sea, and the traffic headed to or from the East China Sea.) Another ROK participant talked about needing to keep a “task flotilla” in an operational status at sea for 30 days. This requirement will dictate the procurement of logistics support ships. The ROKN also wants to build a naval base on Cheju to facilitate this mission if it can overcome local political objections.

The ROKN also plans to transform its marine corps from a force organized to fight in a North Korean invasion to a traditional MAGTF/quick-response force. In short, the ROKN is planning a significant improvement in its amphibious assault capability which could be of significance in future territorial disputes with Japan.

### **The ROKN’s relationship with the US Navy is still important.**

ROKN participants clearly recognized and acknowledged with great appreciation the central role the USN played in giving birth to the ROKN after World War II. Korea, having been a Japanese colony for 35 years, had no modern independent naval tradition to draw upon. To quote one of the papers: “The ROK Navy was created from nothing in November 1945. There were no men who had any experience with naval life, no ships, no logistics supplies, no maintenance facilities, no educational facilities and no manuals. No nothing whatsoever.”

The USN initially provided landing craft, yard craft, and minesweepers. Then, following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, a naval advisory group was established. As a result, in addition to equipment, USN organizational concepts and approaches to training were the model for the ROKN.

The ROKN participants recounted how ROK officers who spoke good English were moved ahead, and remembered that it was considered a professionally significant step to be sent to USN schools in the United States.

The participants made it clear that as the ROKN is now focused on the transition from coastal defense to regional operations it is natural for it to seek advice from the USN. Accordingly, the USN has to overcome decades of thinking that the ROK does not need a regionally capable navy because it already has one—the US Seventh Fleet. Throughout its existence, South Korea has had the benefit of this “surrogate navy” to ensure its maritime interests. This was a sensible approach to a predominant land threat on the peninsula. As the perception of a North Korean threat wanes in South Korea, one need



only look at the ROK shipbuilding industry and merchant marine to gain a hint of how the military culture of South Korea might have evolved differently had the threat of military confrontation on the peninsula not been so dire for so long.

In any event, the ROK Navy has a long, positive tradition of USN mentoring. It wants that relationship to continue and broaden to encompass more regional and out-of-area missions.

### **Japan is a potential antagonist, especially in territorial disputes.**

Many American observers of the territorial disputes between the ROK and Japan over the Dokdo/Takeshima islets are quick to say that those bunches of rocks are not worth fighting over. Based on what the Koreans said in the conference presentations and discussions, they do not share this view. They observed that, thanks to technology, the resources of the ocean and sea bed are no longer beyond the reach of humans.

As a result, the Koreans view the sea as an area to be exploited for the prosperity of the ROK. Although these disputed islets have no intrinsic value, the associated economic zone is seen by the Koreans as being quite important. Thus, the sovereignty issue is not simply a matter of nationalism but is also important to the continued economic health of the country. It is so important that the Koreans named their largest warship—the first of the new LPH class—*Dokdo*, to reemphasize the deep emotional importance they place on not only this sovereignty dispute but their tragic history with Japan.

The history of Japanese-Korean military-to-military engagement has been episodic at best, and is often suffers when issues surrounding Japan's colonial and WWII history cause a diplomatic dust-up between Seoul and Tokyo. As a result, US efforts to promote a “virtual” alliance between South Korea, Japan, and the United States have made little progress despite over 15 years' worth of diplomatic and defense efforts. There are some glimmers of hope, but patience will be required in this arena. Relations probably will not truly begin to heal until after the passing of the last generation that knew the occupation.

Meanwhile, as disconcerting as it may be to some US observers, there is little question that current ROKN developments are being undertaken partly with Japan in mind as a potential antagonist.

### **Some concluding thoughts**

Building and sustaining a modern blue-water navy capable of operating throughout the region is expensive. Therefore, understanding the reasons that the leadership of the ROK is obviously willing to commit the necessary resources to “navy building” is central to any sustainable long-term strategic relationship between the ROKN and the USN.

Over the past 15 years, the ROK Navy has grown by introducing more-capable ships, submarines, and aircraft. This means that a compelling strategic case has convinced a leadership in Seoul, not schooled in things maritime, to dedicate the resources necessary



for naval development beyond defense against the North. This suggests the obvious: the ROK leadership believes that the long-term strategic interests of the state can be secured only with a robust blue-water naval force, which in itself is a historic departure from the strategic traditions of Korea.

There are several interrelated motivations behind the development of the ROK Navy:

- **Defense against North Korea.** The 1998 and 2002 West Sea battles, in which the ROKN destroyed several DPRK Navy ships, were reminders that while a North Korean invasion may not seem likely, smaller engagements can still take place. It is important for deterrence, for national morale, and for service prestige that the ROK Navy is able to deal with any North Korean provocations in the maritime domain, and to win these engagements if they result in combat.
- **Maritime trade, globalization, and protection of sea lanes.** As indicated earlier, the ROK, for all practical purposes, is a maritime nation that is increasingly dependent upon seaborne commerce for its economic life. Its economy also depends on energy that comes mainly by sea. Over the next 20 years, the ROK's dependence on Middle Eastern oil is going to increase, making the maritime portion of the concept of "energy security" even more important. In this regard, the ROK, Japan, and China are all facing the same issue. Today, "energy security" is an argument for "navy building." Clearly, the ROK's increasing dependence on overseas sources of energy heightens the importance of the maritime arena as a national security interest.
- **Strategic independence or regional "balancer."** Most South Koreans have no doubt about which side will eventually prevail in the Korean civil war. They think it is only a matter of time before the Pyongyang regime begins to evolve economically and politically in a way that will lead to peaceful reunification with Seoul as the capital of the reunited Korean state. Without such a belief, South Korea's "engagement" policy toward North Korea would make no sense. When the time comes that Korea is reunified, or South Korea is peacefully coexisting with its "northern cousins," South Koreans may want to be in charge of their own strategic destiny. (South Korean scholars have been writing about this for years. One conference paper spoke on the desirability of South Korea's being a "balancer," i.e., being able to choose those strategic alignments that best suit its interests.)

Translating this aspiration into the naval arena suggests that the ROK needs naval self-reliance, which equates to not having to depend upon the US Seventh Fleet as its surrogate navy. It also suggests that the ROK does not want to depend on Japan, working in harness with the United States, for its maritime security. Finally, the ROK does not want to be under the thumb of the growing and increasingly able PLA Navy. Importantly, the ROK participants clearly indicated a desire to pursue self-reliance within the context of a strong USN-ROKN relationship.



- **Desire for the ROK to be perceived as a responsible stakeholder.** In June 2006, at the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore, ROK Minister of Defense Yoon delivered a presentation entitled “Deploying Forces for International Security: ROKs Perspective.” In it, he made clear that over the past 10 years the ROK has actively participated in international peacekeeping as well as humanitarian relief and that it is actively procuring new capabilities to be able to do more in this regard. He also made clear that legislation in Korea was being changed to make it easier to undertake these missions, and that the ROK Government was working with the UN on becoming a participant in the Stand-by Arrangement.

The appointment of former ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon as UN Secretary General will further enhance the ROKs growing reputation as a “responsible stakeholder.” Having the naval and military capabilities that enable a global humanitarian role is important to the ROK Government, which is anxious to demonstrate that the ROK has a vision of its place and standing in the world that goes beyond the peninsula and Northeast Asia.<sup>2</sup>

- **Maritime disputes with Japan.** As discussed earlier, Koreans see Japan as a potential antagonist, particularly in territorial disputes over the Dokdo/Takeshima islets and their associated economic zone.

### **Shared strategic interests—the basis for navy-to navy strategic cooperation**

It is important for the US Navy to understand the interests that have animated ROK Navy building and oriented it toward a more regional outlook: any strategic cooperation between the two navies that goes beyond the defense of Korea will have to be based upon *shared interests*.

Since at least 2000, the ROKN has avowedly focused on regional naval missions. This has created a new naval strategic milieu in which navy-to-navy cooperation makes perfectly good sense, provided that both the USN and ROKN want to make the effort to create new patterns of cooperation focused on regional issues. The habit of the past 50 years—when navy-to-navy cooperation was limited to dividing the tasks and responsibilities associated with defending against North Korea between the two forces—remains relevant today, but it is not sufficient. The USN needs to take into account the ROKN’s growing capabilities. **In this regard, KIMS is very interested in exploring the 1,000-ship navy concept at a subsequent conference in Seoul.**

Clearly US and ROK naval interests *do not* overlap when comes to disputes between Japan and the ROK. The United States has long believed that, as fellow democracies, the Republic of Korea and Japan share common interests, including many in the maritime domain, and that, as a result, they should have a close strategic relationship.

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<sup>2</sup> Text of speech by MINDEF Yoon on 3 June 2006 in Singapore, in author’s possession. (Author attended the conference.)



Japan's inability to satisfactorily atone for past wrongs is one reason that there has been no long-term regional reconciliation. But, it is also important to help the ROKN appreciate the limits of historical analogy in trying to forecast the future. The current regional environment is so fundamentally different from that of 100 years ago that the historically based arguments used to buttress or fashion anti-Japanese strategic options and power relations are largely irrelevant.

### Bottom line

There is a rich menu of topics for the ROKN and USN to discuss: regional stability, the ROKN's participation in the 1,000-ship navy, regional missile defense, information sharing, humanitarian assistance, UN peacekeeping operations, disaster relief, and the maritime aspects of the war on terrorism. **It will advance US interests and regional stability if the USN can develop a relationship with the ROKN that is as close as the relationship it currently has with the Japanese Maritime Defense Force.** This will take time. The "blue-water" aspects of USN-JMSDF cooperation go back decades. The USN and the ROKN will need to make a sustained mutual effort over the long term if they are going to develop as close a professional relationship as that.

Defense of the peninsula is still an important mission, because North Korea remains a problem. But that does not mean that the relationship between the US and ROK navies has to remain stuck in the past. Regaining OPCON in time of war apparently satisfies the natural political desire of the current ROK administration to be seen as an equal, and in some cases leading, partner in security issues dealing with its own fate. Likewise, due to the growth of the ROK Navy from a coastal defense force to a burgeoning regional navy of note, its relationship with the USN must evolve to one that is more equitable.

This is true not only for the traditional missions associated with the defense of the ROK, but also for the expanding regional mission set (i.e., beyond defense of Korea), on which the ROKN is clearly focused. Developing a broader strategic relationship with the ROK Navy is in the best interests of the United States and contributes to its regional hedging strategy. A closer relationship also is something that the ROK Navy strongly desires; **KIMS and CNA can facilitate this relationship through mutual discussions that complement the official efforts of the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.**

## **FINAL AGENDA**

### **“The Future of ROK Navy –US Navy Cooperation”**

**A Conference Co-Sponsored by the Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy (KIMS)  
And the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA)**

**Doubletree Alana Waikiki Hotel  
1956 Ala Moana Blvd.  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
Tel: 808/941-7275 Fax: 808/949-0996**

#### **Thursday 21 June 2007:**

**1830: Welcome reception and dinner poolside at the Doubletree Alana Hotel**

#### **Friday 22 June 2007:**

**0800-0900: Registration, coffee and pastries the Naupaka Room (4<sup>th</sup> fl. Office building – see enclosed map)**

**0900—0930: Welcome and opening statements by Co-Hosts:**

Mr. Chung Eui-Sung, Founder and Board Chairman KIMS, RADM (retired) Michael McDevitt, Director Center for Strategic Studies, CNA

**0930—1045: Panel One: Topic: “Respective Maritime Strategy's”**

*This panel will set the stage by: (1) Addressing current US Navy thinking regarding maritime strategy in the region, to include a discussion of the National Strategy for Maritime Security, the 1000 ship navy and maritime oriented initiatives such as PSI are all addressed by that strategy; (2) The maritime strategy or vision for its navy that the Republic of Korea holds, (3) and how the defense of the ROK from DPRK fits into the respective strategies' of both navies, especially in view of the shifts occasioned by changes in wartime OPCON.*

--US Maritime Strategy in East Asia: RADM Michael McDevitt, USN (retired)

--ROK Maritime Strategy and the Vision for the Future of the ROK Navy: VADM Lee Ji-do, ROKN (retired)

--Naval Defense of the ROK: The evolution of roles and missions because of wartime OPCON changes: Dr Stanley Weeks, SAIC, (Commander, USN retired)



**1045—1100: Coffee Break**

**1100-1230 Panel Two: Topic: Regional Naval Cooperation--History and Prospects for the Future**

*This panel is intended to: (1) discuss the US experience with navy-to navy cooperation with naval allies who have blue-water navies, and (2) learn more about ROKN ambitions and desires regarding the future of Navy-to navy cooperation with the USN and other regional navies.*

--The US Navy's Experience: The Cases of Japan and Australia: Dr James Auer, Vanderbilt University, (Commander, USN retired)

--Personal Experiences and Observations: Admiral Archie Clemins, USN (retired), former commander U.S. Pacific Fleet

--ROKN Navy Experiences in Cooperation with USN and Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force: Rear Admiral Han Sang-ki, ROKN (retired)

--Personal Experiences and Observations from a former Senior ROK Flag Officer: Admiral An Byoung-tae, ROKN (retired) (Former ROKN CNO)

**1230—1400 Lunch: Speaker TBD**

**1400—1600: Panel Three: Unique Opportunities for Cooperation—Energy Security from Hormuz to Northeast Asia and Humanitarian Assistance from the Sea**

*The purpose of this panel is to explore with some specificity, to include present and future capabilities, the possibilities for ROKN-USN cooperation in oil-SLOC security and "humanitarian (including natural disaster) assistance from the sea." The US presentation should include examples from past experience, and the ROK presentation should include its thinking about these missions and how ROKN capabilities could be so employed in the future.*

US presentation: Oil-SLOC Security: What is the Threat and How Can the Mission be accomplished? Dr. Bud Cole, Captain, USN (ret), Professor, National War College

US Presentation: Humanitarian Assistance from the Sea: Lessons from the Indonesian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. Ms. Christine Fox, President, Center for Naval Analyses

ROK presentation: ROKN Navy views on SLOC Security and Humanitarian assistance: Professor Kim Taeho

**1600-1645: Concluding Commentary: Prospects for Future Cooperation and Next Steps**

Moderator: RADM Michael McDevitt, USN (retired)

Mr. Chung Eui Sung, Founder and Board Chairman, KIMS

Admiral An Byoung-tae, ROKN (retired) President KIMS and former ROKN CNO

The Honorable James Kelly, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia

Admiral Ronald Zlatoper, USN (retired) former Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet

**1830—2000 Reception Followed by Dinner for Participants: Location Chart House  
(walking distance from hotel – see enclosed map)**



# APPENDIX



# **U.S. Maritime Strategy in Asia- Pacific**

***A presentation for the Future of ROK Navy-  
US Navy Cooperation Conference***

**by  
Michael McDevitt**



## Background Context:

### Five Fundamentals of US East Asia Strategy (I)

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- Access to “Asia Market”
  - Open door
  - Not excluded from economic life of Asia
- Permanent naval/military presence
  - Time distance factor/vastness of Pacific
  - US Navy in East Asia since 1835
- No domination of East Asia (including SLOC’s) by a hostile or anti-American power
  - 1899-1945: Balance or counter Japan
  - 1950-1991: Contain communism
  - 2001-?: Hedge against assertive/destabilizing China

## Background Context:

### **Five Fundamentals of US East Asia Strategy (II)**

- **Need for naval/military bases in East Asia**
  - Coaling station in Japan (Perry/Black Ships)
  - Annexation of Hawaii
  - Occupation/Annexation of Guam and Philippines
  - Post WWII/Korean War bases in Japan/ROK
  - Post Philippine bases/access arrangements in Southeast Asia
- **Encourage Democratic Development**
  - Long, if inconsistent, record
  - Philippine's early 1900's
  - Failed attempts: Nationalist China, Vietnam (but, helped SEA)
  - Post WWII Japan and Korea
  - Taiwan
  - Indonesia



# Major US Interests Today



- Political stability to facilitate economic development throughout East Asia
- Economic access (free trade) and a “level” economic playing field
- Honoring and strengthening formal defense obligations to: ROK, Japan, Australia, Singapore, Thailand and Philippines
- Deterring conflict in Korea
- Deterring conflict across Taiwan strait
  - An “implied” defense obligation
- Rolling back North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons
- Defeating terrorism in Southeast Asia

Naval strategy must *support* these

# Strategic Transition in Asia Underway

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- Economic center of gravity for US shifting from littoral to the mainland
- Military center of gravity for US remains in East Asian littoral
- Long-term strategic dichotomy
  - Balance between hedging and engaging China
- Comprehending the implications of India's emergence; and Russia reemergence
- Unique time in history: the simultaneous existence of a strong Japan, strong China and strong ROK

Naval strategy must *address* these



## Realities that Shape Naval Strategy In Asia-Pacific



- Other than Korea very low likelihood of major conflict on Asian mainland
- China is, and has been for some time, the dominant power on mainland of Asia
- Virtually all of the closest US allies and friends are Island or Archipelagic countries
  - DMZ makes ROK a “virtual” island
- The economic aspect of globalization depends upon maritime commerce
- Given vastness of Pacific and Indian Oceans USN needs cooperative maritime partners to ensure use of high seas remains free

**Naval strategy must *account* for these**

# Policy Imperatives that Pacific Fleet Must Execute



- Naval role in strengthening all US alliances—especially Japan
  - Bases essential for major fleet presence in Western Pacific
  - Navy too small to do it rotationally
  - DPRK missile defense in SOJ/East Sea
- Central role in deterring conflict across Taiwan Strait
  - A long term “gnawing constant”
- Naval diplomacy in support of national policy objectives
  - US-ROK-Japan trilateral relations
  - India
  - “Engaging” China
  - Southeast Asia: hospital ship Mercy deployment
- National Strategy for Maritime Security
  - Maritime Domain Awareness



# Operational Imperatives Pacific Fleet Must Execute



- Trump PLA anti-access efforts
  - Deal with submarines
  - Cope with missiles
- Support to war on terror in Southeast Asia
- Operationalize “1000 ship navy” concept
- Improve regional capacity for PSI
- High-end exercises to improve readiness/interoperability with traditional friends and allies
  - ROK, Japan, Singapore, Australia
- Navy-to-Navy capacity building efforts—especially Malacca
- Traditional show the flag operations
- Respond to natural disasters/ Humanitarian Assistance

# Bottom Lines

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- USN maritime strategy in Asia-Pacific is:
  - Depends upon “access” to East Asia
  - Focused on directly supporting US interests, both traditional and contemporary
  - Shaped by geo-political and geo-strategic realities of the region—which includes the ongoing strategic transition
  - Heavily dependent on friends and allies
  - Is not static; evolves as capabilities change and new challenges emerge



# Naval Defense of the ROK: The Evolution of Roles and Missions Because of Wartime OPCON Changes

**Dr. Stanley Byron Weeks**

Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

Conference on "The Future of ROK Navy-US Navy Cooperation"  
Co-Sponsored by Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy and CNA

Honolulu, Hawaii

21-22 June 2007

# AGENDA

- Wartime OPCON Changes
- ROKN Future Forces
  - Ships
  - Submarines
  - Amphibious Forces
  - Aircraft
  - Bases
  - C4I
- Broader ROKN Missions
- Challenges and Implications
- Conclusions



# WARTIME OPCON CHANGES

- Feb 2007 Agreement of Minister of Defense Kim Jang-soo and Secretary of Defense Gates
  - ROK reclaims operational control of its forces 17 April 2012
  - CFC simultaneously disbanded, new “supporting-supported command relationship” adopted
  - US military augmentation in contingencies still guaranteed
  - Roadmap for transfer commencing July 2007
  - Prior test/certification drills from 2010 through March 2012

# Official US Comments on Wartime OPCON Changes

- US Ambassador to ROK Vershbow (Sept 2006): “a natural and positive evolution in the alliance—part of the process of making it a more balanced partnership.”
- CFC Commander General Bell (SASC Testimony 24 April 2007): “the next logical phase in the maturation of the ROK-U.S. Alliance... The United States views this effort as an affirmation of the tremendous success of the Alliance since the end of the Korean War, and fully supports this change... This is a natural evolution—one whose time has come both militarily and politically... The United States desires that our future force contributions leverage our extremely quick reacting and readily available potent air and naval capability while supporting the superb ROK Army ground forces to counter North Korean aggression...”



# ROKN FUTURE FORCES: SHIPS

- Ship Types:
 

- KDX III (7650 Tons, Aegis)	3 (+3?)
- KDX II (4500 Tons)	6 (+?)
- KDX I (3000 Tons)	3
- FFX	?
- FF (Ulsan Class)	9
- Corvettes	32
- PKX (500 Tons)	21 (+?)
- PKM (150 Tons)	75
- MCM	9 (MLS)
- AOR	1
- AOE	3

## IMPLICATIONS:

- Fulfillment of ROK President Kim Dae-jung's 2001 strategic vision of a new "Strategic Mobile Fleet"
- Much enhanced Blue Water/regional reach
- New mission capabilities (Aegis Air Defense (and eventual TBMD?), Strike)
- Challenges: C41, Operational Organization, training, manning, maintenance

# ROKN FUTURE FORCES: SUBS

- Submarine Types:
  - KSS III (3000 Tons, indigenous, 2018 IOC) 9
  - KSS II (Type 214, 1800 Tons, AIP) 9
  - KSS I (Type 209, 1200 Tons) 9
  - Other 9
- Implications:
  - Longer range and endurance (AIP)
  - New mission capabilities: Longer range SLOC patrol
  - Challenges of Waterspace Management w/other navies in region
  - Expense of indigenous development



# ROKN FUTURE FORCES:

## AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS

- LPX (14,000 Tons, 750 Marines, 15 Helos, 2 LCACs) 2(+1?)
- LST-2 (4500 Tons, IOC 2013-2016) 4
- LST 8
- LCM 8
- LCAC 3
- IMPLICATIONS:
  - Large Deck Air Capability (future VSTOL capability?)
  - Potential centerpiece of Expeditionary Group
  - Range/capacity for regional Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief

# ROKN FUTURE FORCES:

## AIRCRAFT

• Aircraft Types:	
– P3C	8 (+ 8/9?)
– Cessna F406	5
– Lynx Helos	24
– Other Helos	34

### IMPLICATIONS:

- Possible doubling of P3C
- Helos and LCACs for LPXs?



# ROKN FUTURE FORCES: BASES

- Current Bases: Chenhae (ROKFLT CMD), Pusan (3<sup>rd</sup> Flt), Donghae (1<sup>st</sup> Flt), Pyongtaek (2<sup>nd</sup> Flt) plus various stations at Incheon, Pohang, Mokpo, Cheju
- By 2014, new Fleet base at Cheju Island
- IMPLICATIONS:
  - Cheju Island base strategic location
  - Extends positioning for Blue Water operations

# ROKN FUTURE FORCES: C4I

- C4I critical for “quality versus quantity” against DPRK
- C4I critical also to more distant, Blue Water operations of high capability “Strategic Mobile Fleet”
- Aegis Destroyer and LPX potential as command platforms for Expeditionary Groups AND C4I to counter DPRK SOF Infiltration (and eventually TBMs?)
- Organizational Change to leverage C4I: Move from current three Geographic Fleets to more flexible Task Group organization?



# BROADER ROKN MISSIONS

- **Navy as Force for Trade/SLOC Protection** (counter-piracy, counter trafficking (goods, people, arms, WMD))
  - Enhance public's maritime awareness
- **Navy as Force for Good (SAR, Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief)**
- **International Maritime Cooperation (in, and beyond, region)**
  - With USN: SLOC security, Aegis operations, anti-swarming tactics, MCM
  - With Japan: ROKN can leverage common maritime interests, lead in overcoming bad history
  - With PRC: Fall 2007 new Naval Hotline, SAR exercises
  - With Russia: SAR and other naval exercises
  - With ASEAN and Indian Navy: Counter-piracy, SAR, MCM, other exercises
- **IMPLICATIONS:**
  - ROKN now playing in more complex Premier League—C4I critical
  - USN can assist (building on experience with ROKN in peninsula defense and in RIMPAC since 1990)
  - Consistent with USN New Maritime Strategy emphasis on Global Maritime Partnership/Thousand Ship Navy



# CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS

- **C4I for the Premier League required**
- Manning, training, and maintenance/support also vital
- Counter-SOF/Infiltration “home game” mission against DPRK still critical, cannot be neglected as ROKN engages more in Blue Water “away game” (leverage KDX III as C4I platform)
- As part of Roadmap for OPCON transfer, ROKN and USN might consider:
  - Establishing a **Maritime Mission Review Process** to systematically analyze together, mission area by mission area, each of the supported and supporting roles, identify potential gaps and develop plans/timetables to correct, to assist in maximum assumption of lead roles by ROKN by 2012 OPCON transfer date
  - 57 months and counting



## **Panel Two: Regional Naval Cooperation – History and Prospects for the Future**

### **The U.S. Navy's Experience: The Cases of Japan and Australia**

#### **“The Future ROK Navy-US Navy Cooperation”**

**June 22, 2007**

**A Conference Co-Sponsored by the Korean Institute of Maritime Strategy (KIMS) and the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA)**

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**James E. Auer**  
**Director, Center for U.S.-Japan Studies and Cooperation**  
**Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies**





## **I. Goals of a 1000-ship Navy:**

**US Naval Institute “Proceedings” October 2006: Vice Admiral John Morgan, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information, Plans and Strategy (N3/N5) and Rear Admiral Charles Martoglio, Director of the Navy’s Strategy and Policy Division:**

**“This is not a thousand gray hulls flying the American flag.”**





## **The explicit goals of a 1000-ship Navy are:**

- 1. to expand security by increasing 'maritime domain awareness,' meaning knowledge and understanding of what is happening on, under, and adjacent to the oceans;**
- 2. having assets ready and available to respond to crises and emergencies that occur at sea or in the littorals that can be accessed from the sea;**
- 3. (implicit) reinforcing the safety of trade and commerce and have a positive impact on global economics.**





## II. Components of a 1000-ship Navy today:

Morgan and Martoglio: “Without question, the first and predominant contributors to the 1000-ship Navy are navies of the international community. Taken as a whole, only these navies are capable of operating across the globe’s entire maritime domain, from local ports and territorial waters to the high seas.”





### III. 1000-Ship Navy during the Cold War:

1950s – 1960s: US Navy WAS the 1000-ship Navy

1970s: US Navy loses numbers; Rise of the Soviet Navy

- CNO James L. Holloway III: “I cannot guarantee control of the sea in the Northwest Pacific.”
- Bridging the gap and reassuring Japan: homeporting of USS MIDWAY in Yokosuka





## **1980s: Japan to the Rescue**

- **Soviet Far East**
  - 100 submarines – the most difficult challenge
- **US Seventh Fleet**
  - 3 aircraft carrier battle groups
  - 20 destroyers
  - 25 P3Cs





- **Japan Self-Defense Fleet**
  - 40 destroyers
  - 100 P3/P3C aircraft
- **Together US and JMSDF P3s negated the Soviet submarine threat**
  - **Interoperable patrols in the Sea of Japan**
    - Real time, covered computer to computer communication
  - **virtually every Soviet submarine detected**





## **IV. Post Cold War 1000-ship Navy in the**

### **Asia Pacific:**

**US Navy: up in capability, down in numbers**

**JMSDF becomes Aegis capable**

- **Japan declines in 1991 Gulf War**
- **Ships in the Indian Ocean – continuous since November 2001**

**Australia remains a maritime regional power**

- **contributions to local and regional security**
- **overseas contributions in Korea, Vietnam, Gulf Wars I and II**





## V. THE NAVAL BALANCE IN THE PACIFIC

	US PACIFIC FLEET	OZ	JAPAN	CHINA
MAJOR NAVAL VESSELS	58 (CVN, CG, DDG, FFG) 10 BASED IN JAPAN	13 FFG, FF	53 DDG, DD, FFG	76 DDG, FFG
MP ASW AIRCRAFT	20 P3C BASED IN JAPAN	17 P3C	80 P3C	4 SH5
SUBMARINES	8 SSBN, 27 SSN	6 SSK	16 SSK	1 SSBN 57 SSN, SSG <sup>9</sup> , SSK

SOURCE: IISS Military Balance 2007





## CONCLUSION:

Morgan and Martoglio:

- The United States and the international community need the **1000-ship Navy** because highly adaptable, present and postured naval forces illustrate a crucial point—the proactive cost of ensuring the day-to-day security in the maritime domain is drastically more affordable than the reactive costs of going to war or mounting a reactive, large-scale security operation.





- The U.S. Navy is in a unique position to facilitate voluntary enlistment of nations as members in this global partnership.
- Auer:
  - Japan and Australia have become increasing invaluable blue water partners in the **1000-ship Navy**.
  - Korea is welcome as it enters the Aegis era.



# **“Oil-SLOC Security: What is the Threat and How Can the Mission be Accomplished?”**

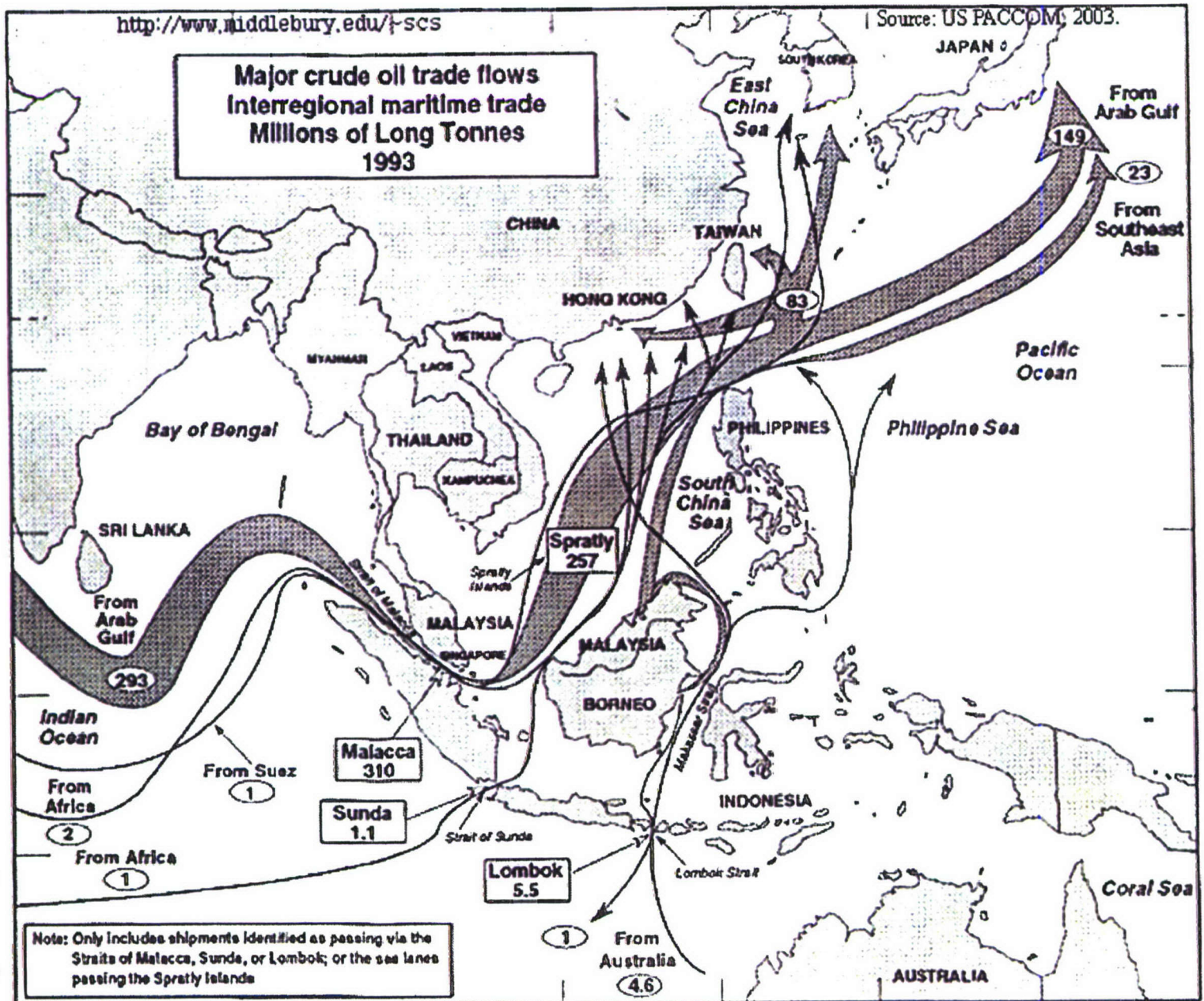
**Dr. Bud Cole,  
Professor, National War College  
Captain, USN (Ret.)**

# **Points of Discussion**

- **Geography of the Region: The Maritime Arena**
- **History of SLOC Interdiction in Asia**
- **SLOC Protection: Against What Threats?**
- **SLOC Protection: How?**
- **SLOC Protection: Recommendations for USN-ROKN**



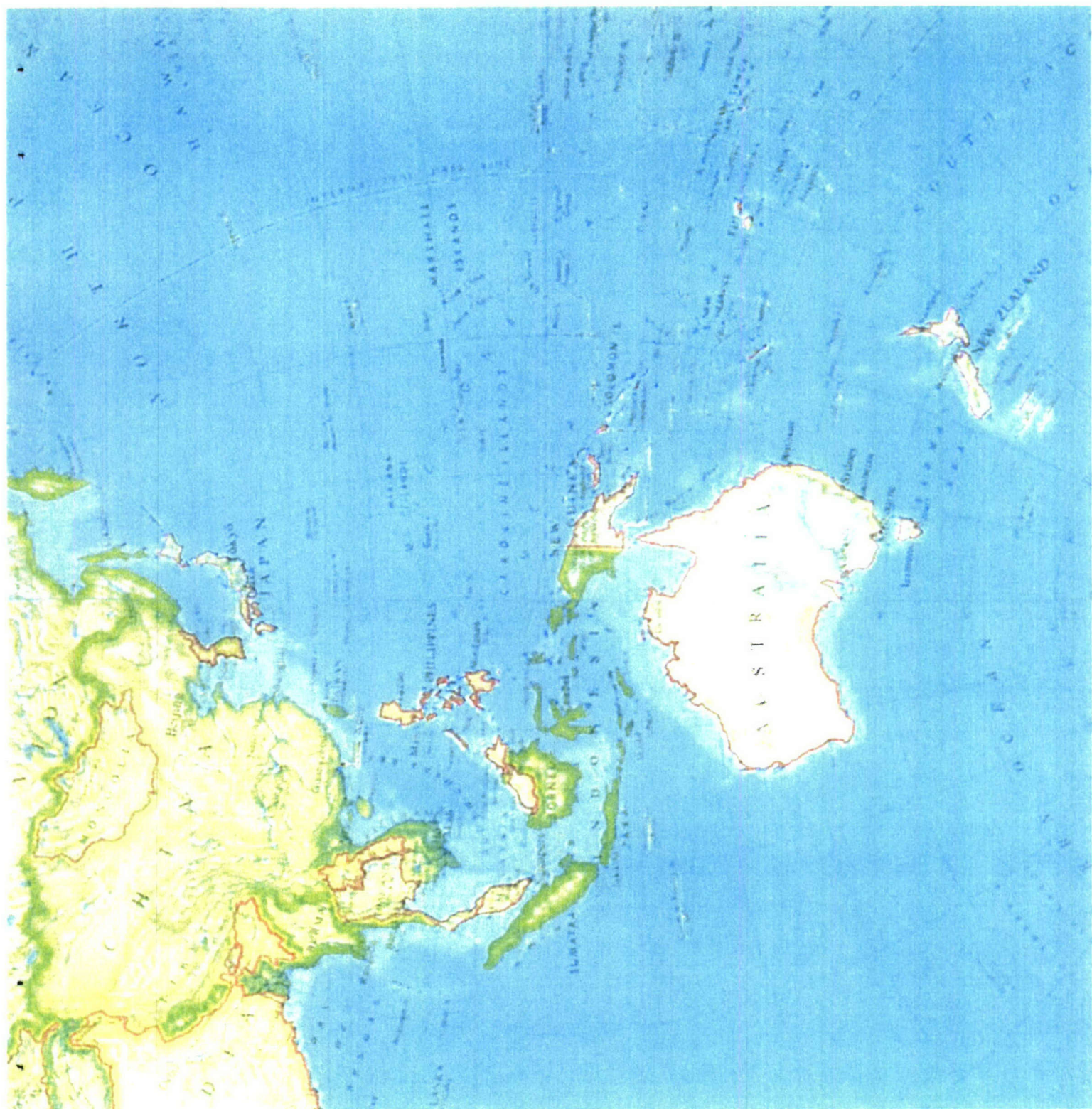
# Major Crude Oil Flows 1993



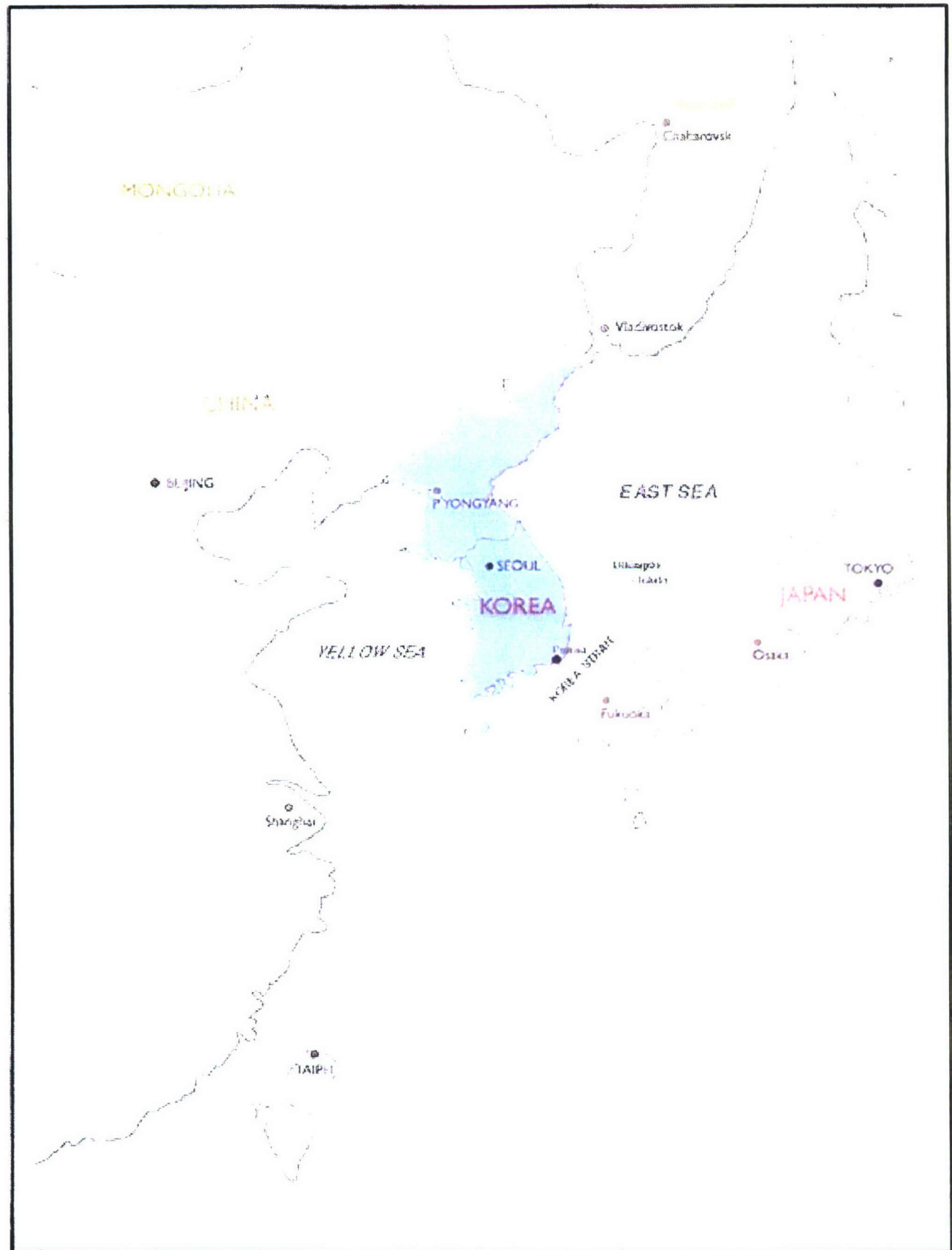
# **The Maritime Arena**

- **Korean Waters**
- **East China Sea**
- **South China Sea**
- **Indian Ocean**



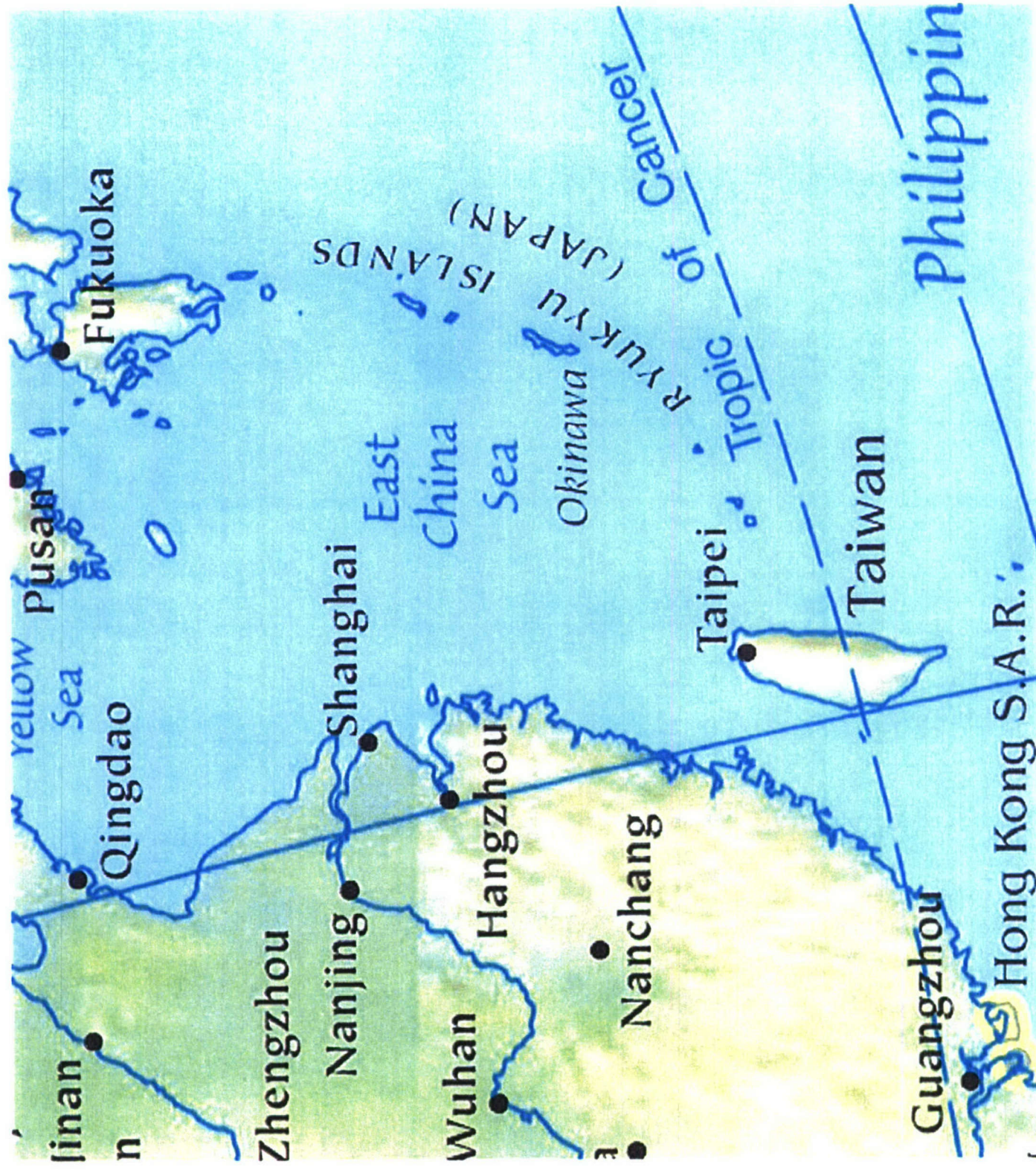


# Korean Waters





# East China Sea





# South China Sea

SOUTHEAST ASIA

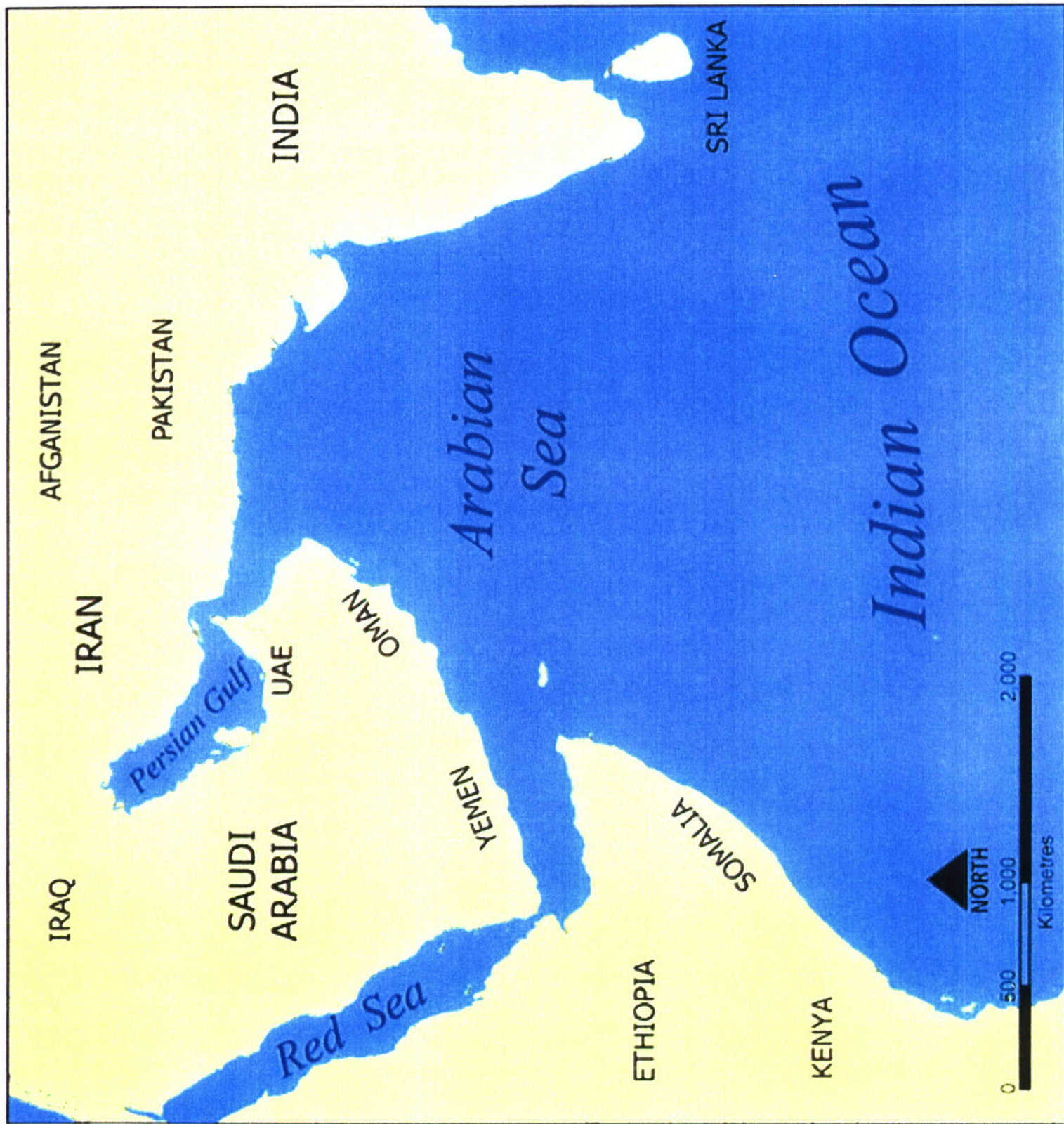
Source: C.I.A 2003













# **History of SLOC Defense / Interdiction in Asia**

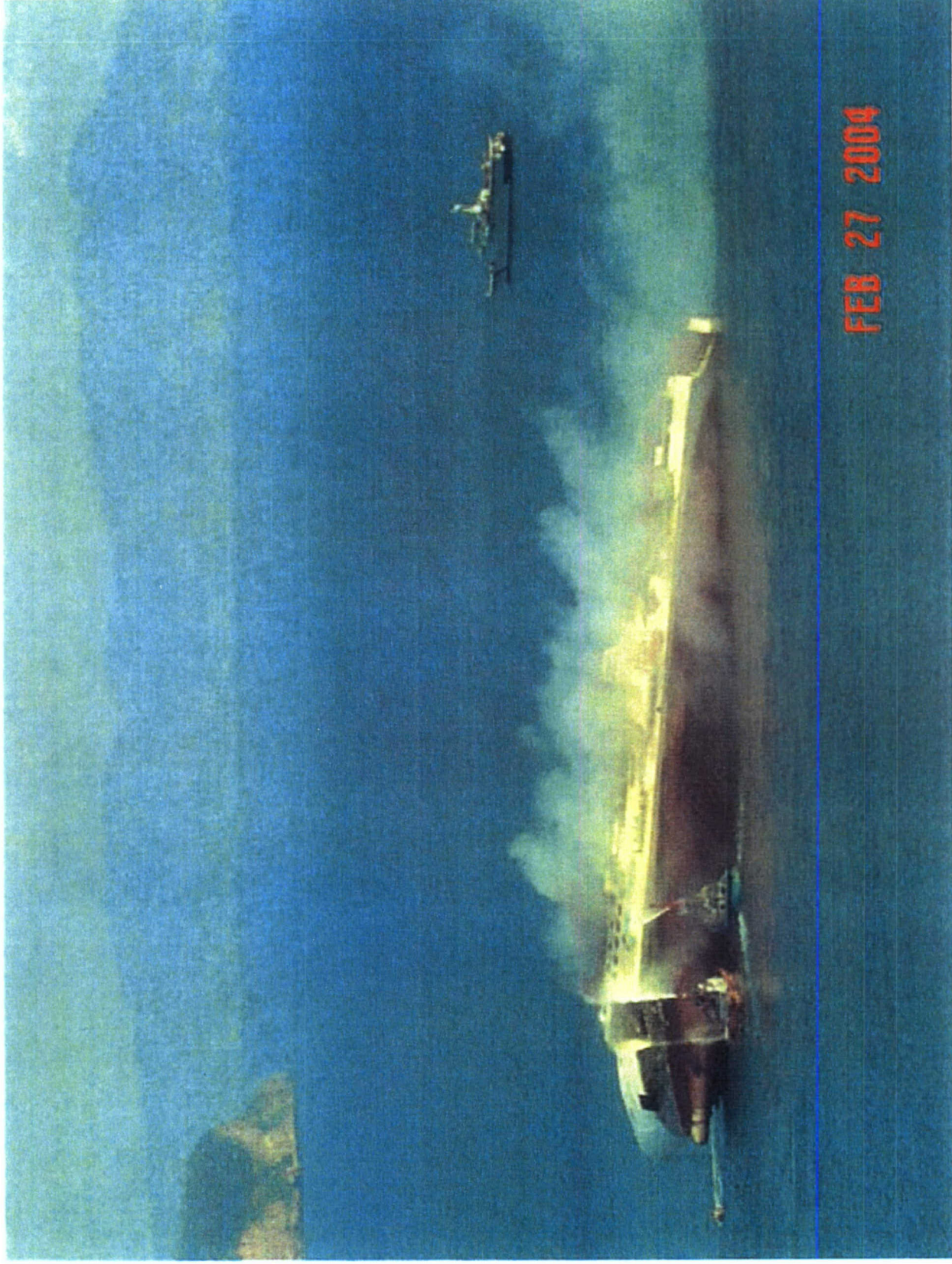
- **Pre-World War II: Alliance**
- **World War II: U.S.**
- **Cold War: Alliance (US-ROK; US-Japan; US-Australia....)**
- **Post-9/11: Alliance + PSI, RMSI, ARF+3**

# **SLOC Protection: Against What? (I)**

- **Terrorism at Sea**
- **Natural Hazards**
- **Piracy and Crime**



# Terrorism





# Natural Hazards



<http://community.middlebury.edu/~scs/>



# Piracy and Crime



# **SLOC Protection: Against What? (II)**

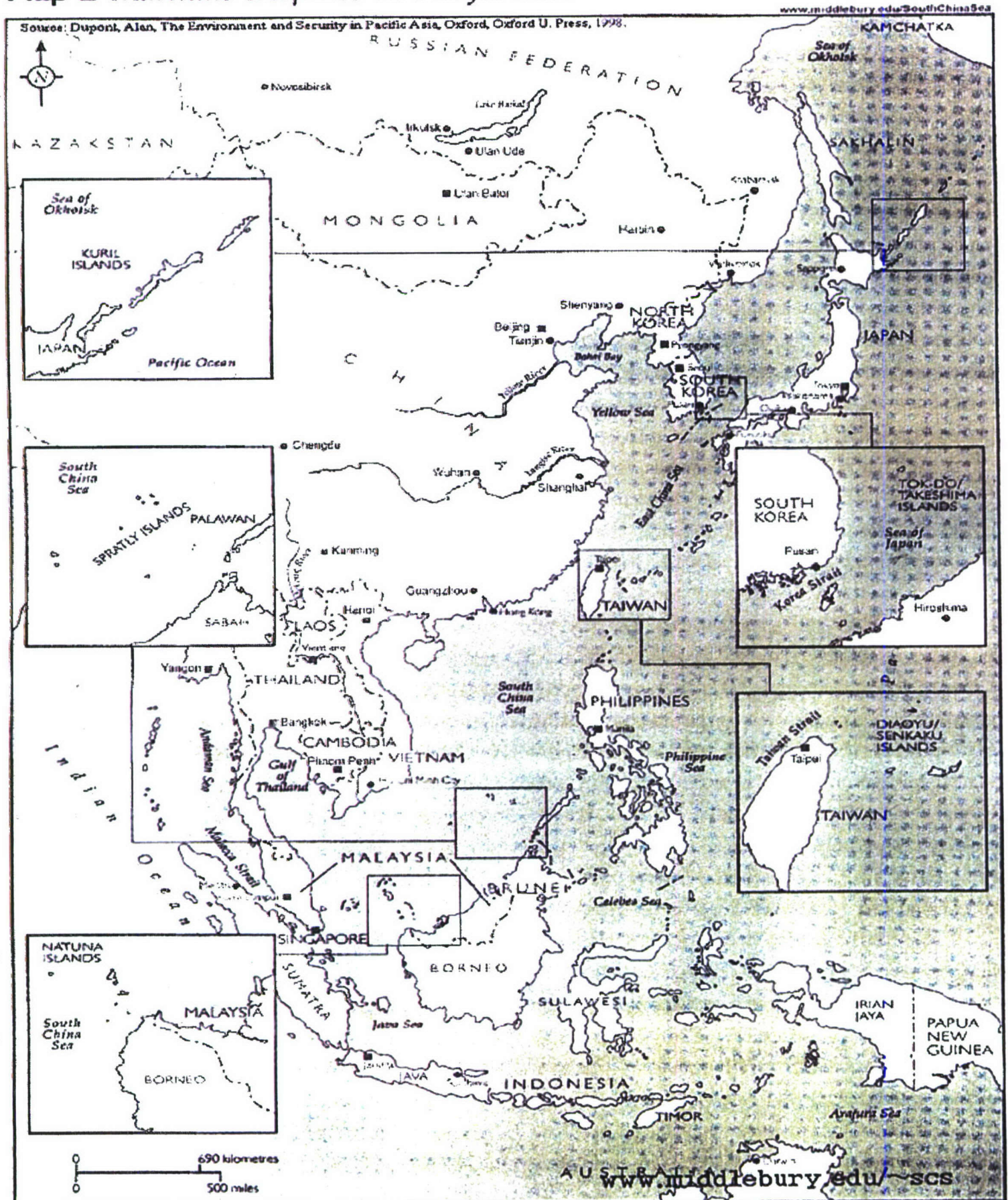
- **Sovereignty Disputes**

- **Japan/Russia:** Kuriles
- **Japan/Korea:** Takdo
- **Japan/China:** Daoyutais/East China Sea
- **South China Sea:**  
China/Vietnam/Philippines/Malaysia/  
Indonesia/ Brunei

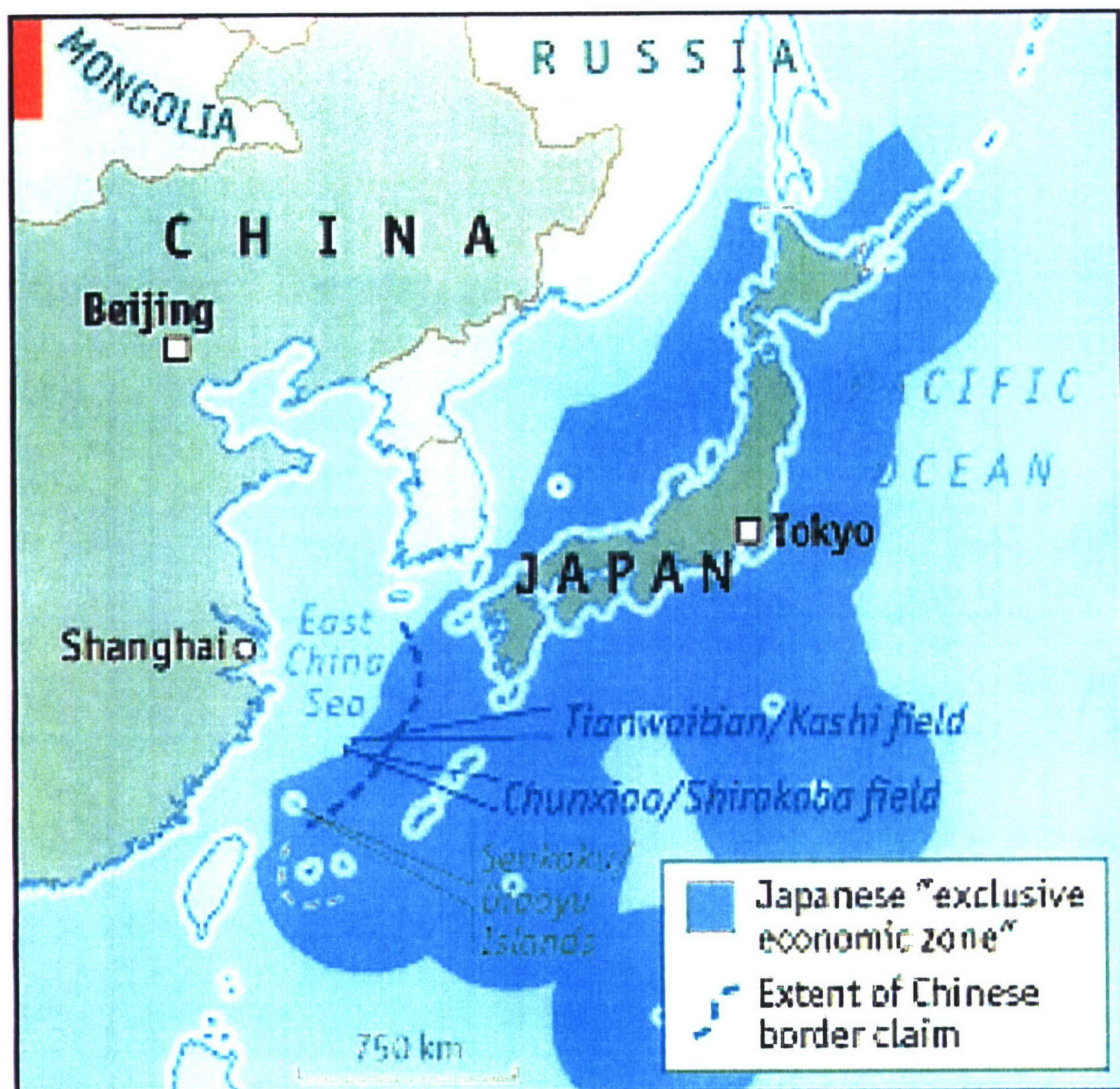


# Maritime Disputes

Map 2 Maritime Disputes in Pacific Asia









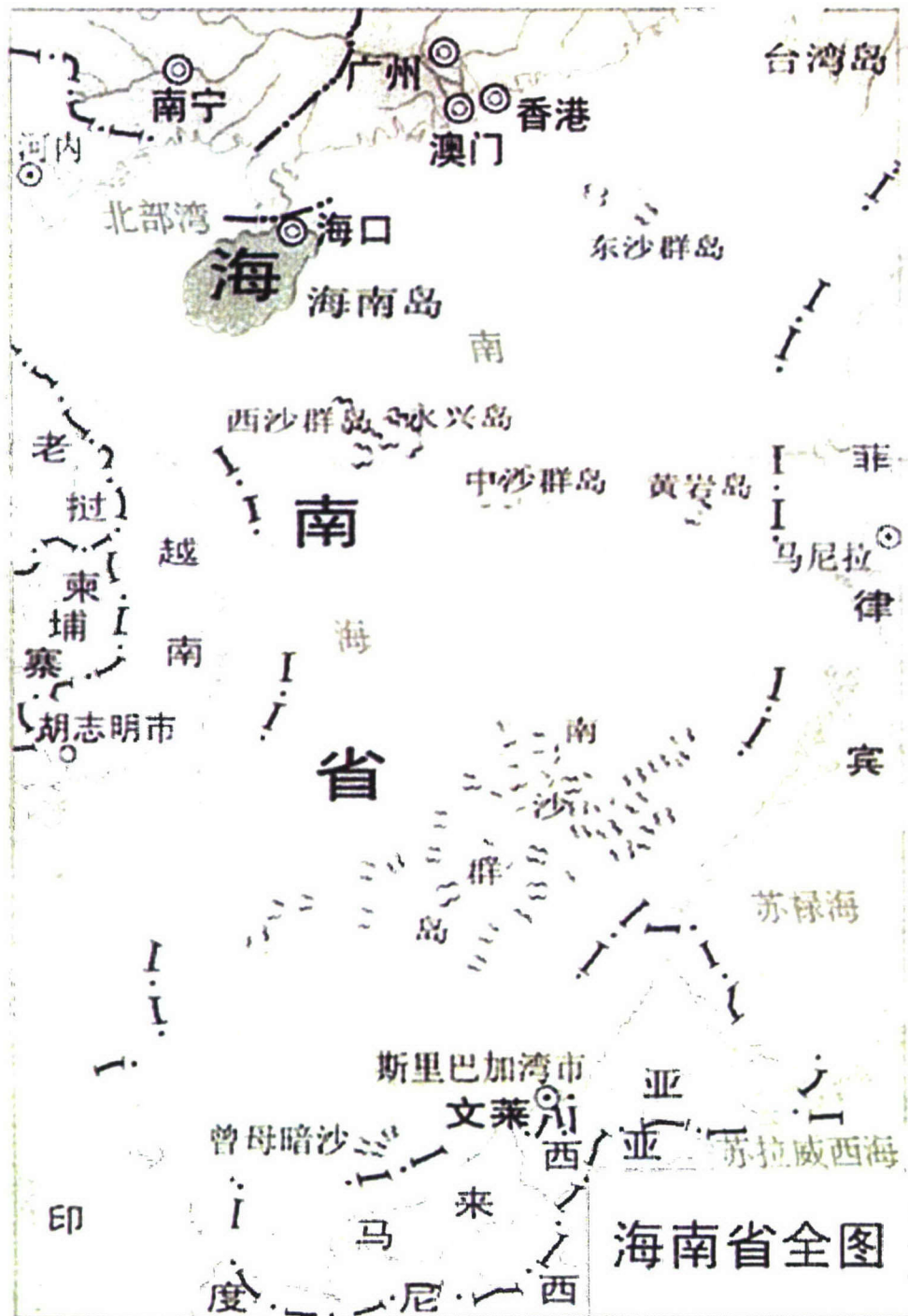
# South China Sea

China's Nine-Dash Line Map of South China Sea Claims

310

*Security Dialogue* vol. 31, no. 3, September 2000

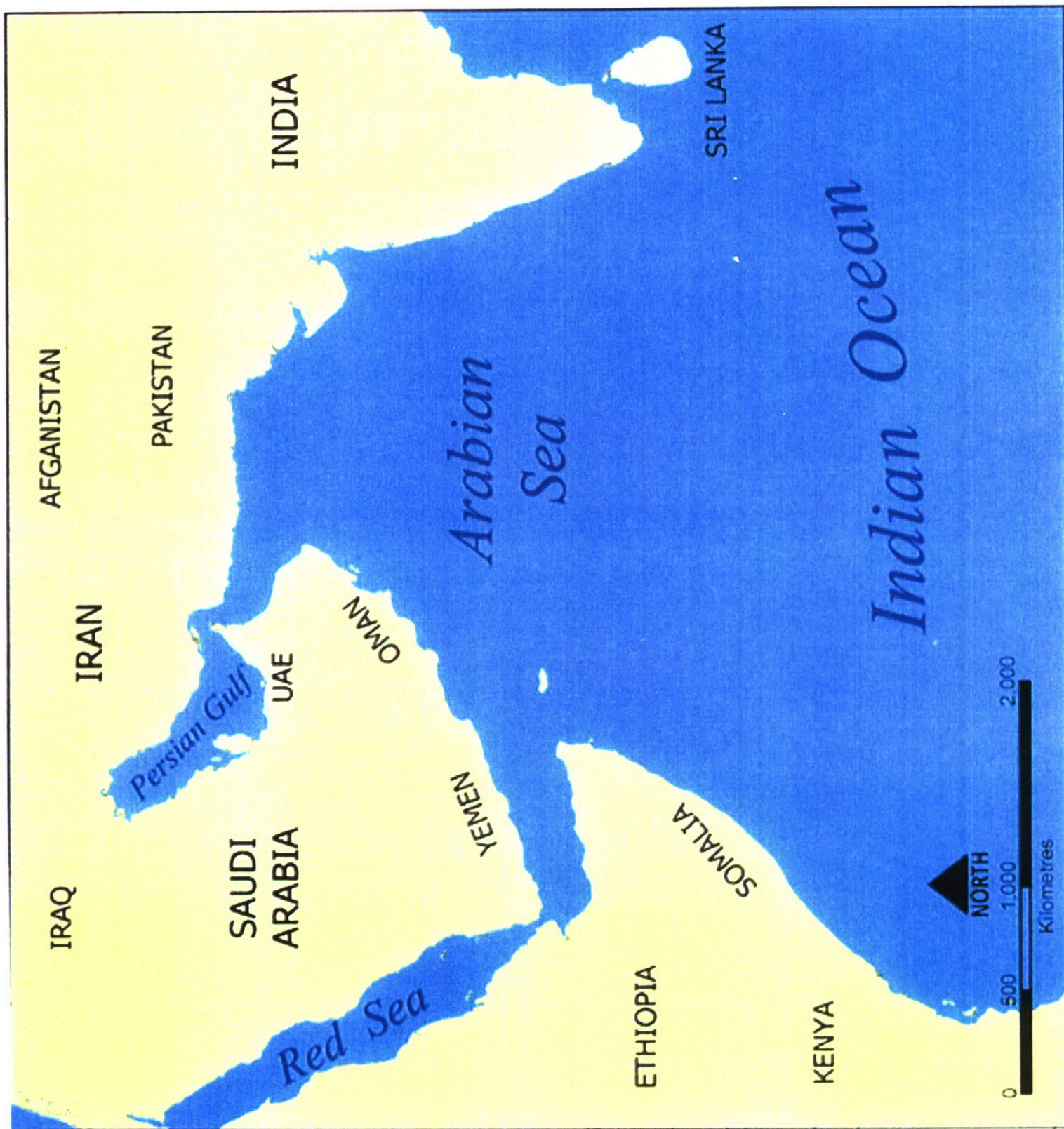
[www.middlebury.edu/SouthChinaSea/](http://www.middlebury.edu/SouthChinaSea/)



Map 2: Official Chinese map of the South China Sea with the nine-dotted line

Source: The Traffic and Tourist Map of Hainan, 1999.

Adapted from Stein Tonnesson, "China and the South China Sea: A Peace Proposal," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 31, no. 3, September 2000





# **SLOC Protection: Against What? (III)**

- **Regional Conflict**

- **China – Japan**
- **China – Taiwan**
- **India - Pakistan**

## **Protect the SLOCs: Against Whom?**

- **ROK, Japan, Russia, Japan, India**  
**capable of intercepting littoral SLOCs**
- **Only the U.S. capable of intercepting**  
**Asia-wide SLOCs**



# **Recommendations**

- **Continue to develop multilateral coalitions, with particular attention to C4I**

- **Strengthen US – ROK Maritime Cooperation**



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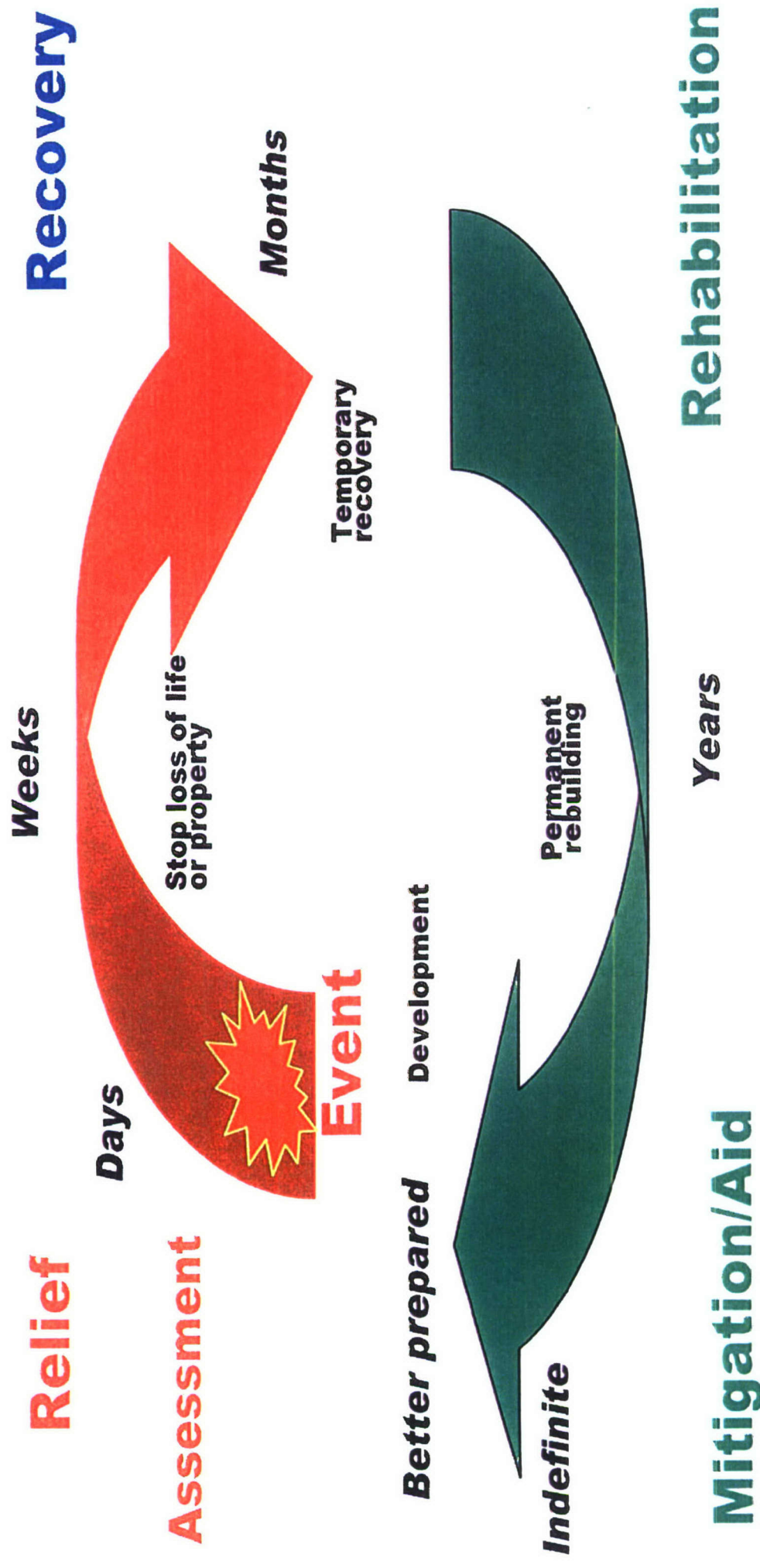
# **Disaster Relief from the Sea**

## **Lessons Learned from Tsunami and Katrina Response**

**Christine Fox**  
**President, CNA**



# Phases of disaster response



# Relief operations

CNA

- Rapid response required
  - For the tsunami relief operations,
    - Carrier Strike Group arrived less than 7 days after tsunami
    - Soon joined by Expeditionary Strike Group
  - For Katrina relief operations,
    - Amphibious ships and a carrier arrived off the Louisiana coast within one week
- Missions included:
  - Save lives (rescue/evacuation operations)
  - Provide clean water and safe food
  - Provide access to medical services
- Big decks functioned as afloat staging bases for distribution of relief supplies ashore



# Did it make a difference?



- Tsunami
  - Delivered 5.7 million pounds of supplies over 41 days
  - Very positive impact
    - Media
    - Polling
- Katrina
  - Over 10,000 rescues and evacuations
  - Distributed more than 2 million pounds of food and water in about 3 weeks

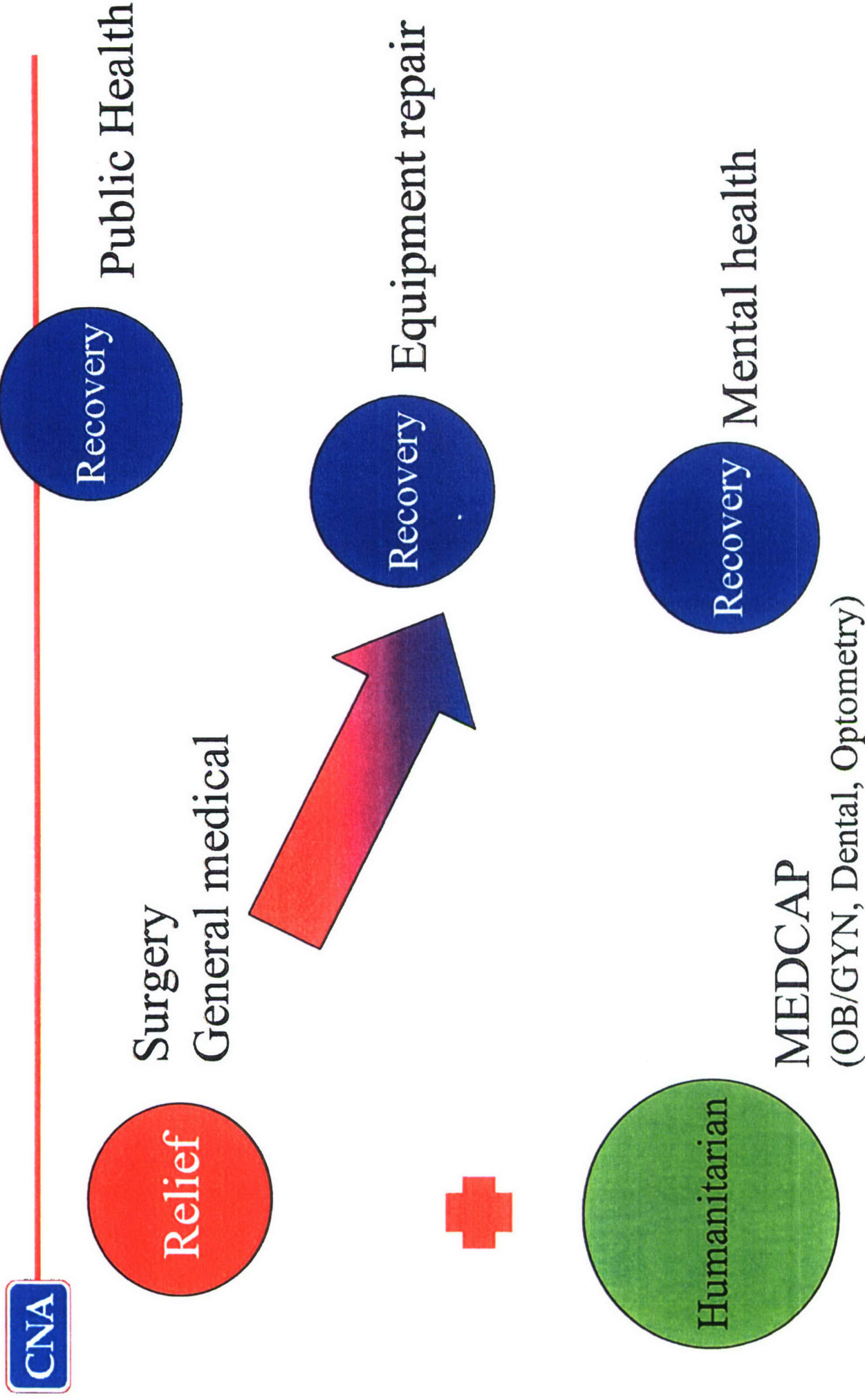
# Recovery operations



- USNS Mercy arrived about 1 month after Tsunami hit
  - Arrived at beginning of recovery stage of operation
  - Carrier departed 2 days before Mercy arrived
- Very different requirement than relief
  - Long-term medical and psychological effects
  - Re-building infrastructure



# Recovery phase tasks?



# Where was the effort?



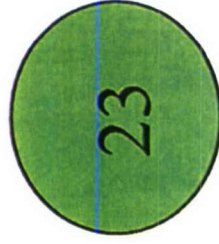
Surgery  
General medical



Public Health



Equipment repair



MEDCAP



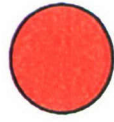
Mental health



# Where was the demand?



100's



Surgery

General medical

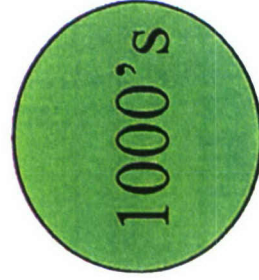
10,000's

Public Health



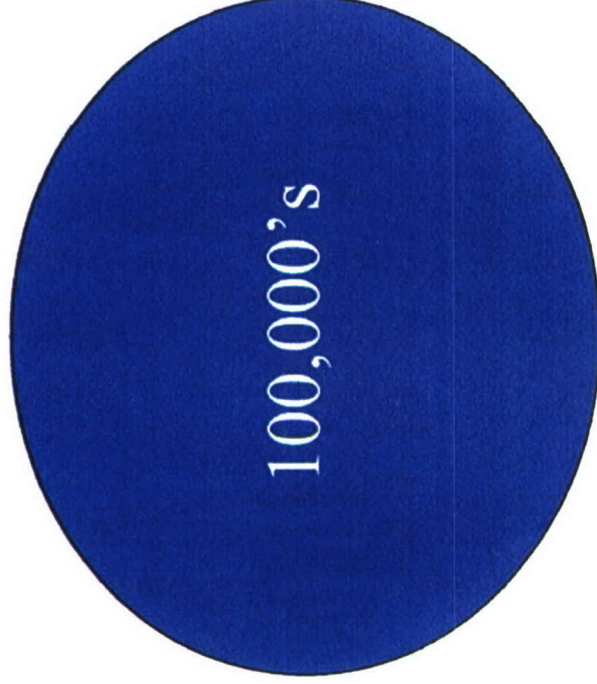
1000's

Equipment repair



1000's

MEDCAP



100,000's

Mental health

# Lessons Learned

CNA

- Naval vessels bring three important things to the Disaster Response mission:
  - Big decks that support rotary wing helos and ship-to-shore surface transport
  - Safe, secure, and stable command, control, and communications
- When you arrive really matters
  - Relief operations are very different than recovery operations
  - Anticipate the phase of operation for scheduled arrival and plan accordingly
- Naval support to both relief and recovery operations has significant positive impact on the local and regional populations



# ROK Maritime Strategy and the Vision for the Future of the ROK Navy

VADM (ret) Lee, Ji Doo

(Former) Honolulu Consul General

June 22, 2007

## 1. Introduction

For human beings, the “sea” has long remained a path to outer world or an obstacle against external threat. Therefore, the traditional maritime strategy has focused mainly on the utilization of the sea for one’s own purpose and the denial of utilization of the sea by adversaries.<sup>1</sup>

Now, the sea still remains a path, but it is becoming a new and great source of conflicts all around the world. Traditionally, territorial dispute has been the main source of conflicts among human groups. Except very few cases, however, the dispute over territorial right has become rare as time passes. Instead, most of conflicts are being originated from disputes on the rights over and national interests in territorial and international waters. With the revolutionary development of scientific technology, the maritime domain is no longer an untouchable space for human beings. To most countries, the sea is an object to be explored or defended for the survival and prosperity of their nations. As interests in the sea increases, the possibility of maritime dispute becomes higher. Therefore, regarding the sea as a path or an obstacle seems no longer appropriate perspective.

Especially, in Northeast Asia in which the sea becomes the key element for the survival of nations in the economic and political terms, the sea remains a main source of tense confrontation among nations. Even if nations in this area seem to have good diplomatic relations with each other due to the increasing economic and political inter-dependence, they show a strongly exclusive stance on some maritime issues.

In this sense, the sea itself or maritime security will be an important area of concern for the national security of the Republic of Korea (ROK). The ROK has

achieved a remarkable economic development by utilizing intensively the maritime domain during the past half century, and it is no doubt to say that the ROK's future prosperity also depends on the use of the sea.<sup>2</sup> Naval force building to defend this maritime domain is becoming a key issue in the ROK's future national security strategy.

The purpose of this article is to suggest the appropriate directions of naval force building relevant to the ROK's maritime security strategy. To do this, I will suggest first an appropriate maritime security strategy for the ROK, which fit both to international security environment and the ROK's future national security strategy. To find the ROK's national security strategy relevant to security environment in the future, I will review the importance of maritime domain upon national security strategy. The directions of naval force building to accomplish the maritime strategy will be suggested in the final part of this paper.

## 2. Changes in International Security Environment and the Security Strategy of the ROK

### A. International Security Environment

We identify globalization, information revolution, and 9.11 terrorists attack as key events that has brought significant effects on the national security environment of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, globalization, meaning the phenomena of distance shrink in terms of space and time between human groups, has brought both benefits and threats to human beings. Increased international mobility of technology, capital, manpower, and energy has brought new threats to the human beings. Examples of this kind of threats include terror activities, concerns on energy security and environment, the spread of endemic deceases, etc.

Second, the revolutionary development of information technology has also

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History 1660-1783* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p.1. Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and Nuclear Age* (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1982), p. 30.



brought a significant change in the international security environment. As the importance of information and communication technology increases in our life, vulnerability also increases. Cyber attacks to paralyze information and communication systems through hacking, virus attacks on computers, and jamming are new and dire threats to military and national security. Moreover, the revolutionary development of information and communication technologies is a source of speeding up the spread of other threats and brings the spillover effects of threats from one area to other areas.

Third, 9.11 terrorists attack is the last but not the least contributor to bring out changes in the international security environment. On 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the most significant asymmetric attack was executed on the American soil. This event clearly sent a signal to all the nations including the United States that no place is safe from such new kind of security threat. And the nations realized the uncertainty of national security of the future and the terrorist attack with weapons of mass destruction will be one of the most serious future threats to them.

The changes in the international society have promoted changes in the international security environment dramatically. First, we are now living in the world in which all kinds of new security threats occur simultaneously. Terror, religious, racial and historical disputes, threats to the financial and energy supply system, the rapid spread of new diseases, environmental decay are the so-called 21<sup>st</sup> century-style security threats and they are occurring all over the world simultaneously.<sup>3</sup>

Second, even though cooperation among nations is highly emphasized since the end of the Cold War, the possibility of conflict and distrust among nations is still high. International order is showing the two opposite trends that while the need of international cooperation increases, the traditional competition for national interests is an important feature of the current international society. Even after the 9.11 attack, there have occurred disputes among nations, especially, between the United States and other countries, on the legitimacy and relevance of anti-terror and anti-proliferation activities,.

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<sup>2</sup> ROK earned more than 7% of GDP from sea related industries in 1998. See The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, *Ocean Korea 21* (Seoul: MOMAF, 2000), p. 13; ROK Navy, *Navy Going with People* (Daejeon: ROKN) March 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, "International Security situation in 2006," *Issue Paper* (Seoul: IFANS), January 10, 2006.

Third, there have been changes in the traditional world map of alliance and security cooperation. As countries evaluate differently the current international security environment, they seek different security strategies. This resulted in the reevaluation of the role of alliance, the utility of military forces, and therefore the forms of military cooperation or alliance. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began to include several East European countries that were under the influence of the Soviet Union in the past. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is led by China and comprises the former socialist countries in Central Asia, is in the process of development as a new international security institute to counter the emergence of the US-led world order. And even the US-Japan and the ROK-US alliances are changing in order to accommodate security environment changes in the Northeast Asia region.

#### B. Requirements for the ROK's National Security Strategy

National security strategy means an integrated and systemic effort to utilize a nation's all the resources and means to implement the national security objectives. The Korean government announced the first national security in 2004. *Peaceful Prosperity and National Security* published by the government comprises the goals of the national security. The Korean government pursues the four security goals: peace and prosperity, balanced and practical diplomacy, cooperative self-defense, and comprehensive security.<sup>4</sup>

To achieve the goals, the Korean government needs to pay attention to the following specific factors in setting-up and implementing its national security strategy. The first factor is the North Korean threat. No country in the Northeast Asian region including ROK wants a war in the Korean Peninsular. However, North Korea still sticks to a military strategy to win unification war and possesses the capability to do so. Considering the situation that the only policy that the South can take for a peaceful unification is the peaceful coexistence and co-prosperity between the North and the South, the ROK's security strategy should put its first priority to the deterrence of the NK military threats.

Second, the South Korean government should actively participate in the world



order led by the United States. The United States, leading the current world order, is the only and most reliable ally to ROK. To survive in a turbulent and fluid international order, it is necessary for the ROK government to actively participate in the US efforts to build a new international security environment. After September 11, ROK is actively helping the United States in a war against terror. The Korean government dispatched military forces to Afghanistan and Iraq. Especially, since November 2004, ROK has maintained the third largest armed forces, the unit 'Zaytun,' in Iraq among foreign countries participating in the Operation Iraq Freedom (OIF).<sup>5</sup>

Third, the ROK government needs a strategy to react relevantly to the increasing influence of major powers surrounding the Korean Peninsular. History shows that China, Japan and Russia have influenced on the fate of Korea. It is true even to the present. China is expanding its political influence through the mediating role in dealing with inter-Korean relations and through the economical aids and energy investment to North Korea. Russia possesses enough natural resources such as petroleum and gas to influence two Koreas and is trying to recover its regional influence lost after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, Korea needs to have a flexible and balanced national security strategy relying not only upon self-reliance but also on the cooperation with others on the basis of the ROK-US alliance.

Finally, the Korean government should consider the increasing importance of non-military threats. Among many, energy shortage is a critical issue to the economic and military survival of ROK. Currently, Korea is importing 78% of its petroleum from Middle East<sup>6</sup>, and should increase energy purchases from foreign countries to continue its economic growth. In the sea line of communication (SLOC) from Middle East to Korea are many threats that could hinder safe transition of this valuable natural resource. Therefore, the South Korean's national security strategy should comprise maritime security issues.

It seems that while the national security issues of ROK are increasingly influenced by internationalization, ROK has focused on the regional security

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<sup>4</sup> The ROK National Security Council, *Peaceful Prosperity and National Security: Security Initiative for the Participatory Government* (Seoul: NSC, 2004), pp. 23-29.

<sup>5</sup> See [www.zaytun.mil.kr](http://www.zaytun.mil.kr) Homepage of Korea Zaytun Division in Iraq.

problems. Therefore, the Korean government needs to develop national security strategy to meet a broad spectrum of security environment changes, the possibility of change in the inter-Korea relations, the power shifts in the region, and the changed international security environment. The Korean government also needs to build an integrated and comprehensive strategy to respond flexibly all kinds of new security threats in the future.

### 3. Maritime Security and Maritime Strategy of Korea

#### A. Maritime and National Security Strategy of ROK

As mentioned above, considering drastically changing security environment, South Korea cannot find a relevant national security strategy without considering its maritime factors. The reasons that maritime factors should be a core of the national security are as many as follows.

First, sea is the only space that ROK overcomes its geographical limitation and utilizes to enhance the value of the Korean Peninsular. Geographically, Korea has the “half-enclosed sea,”<sup>7</sup> which can be utilized as a stepping-stone to the continent, but the past history shows that Korea has been a continental state rather than a maritime state. After the close of the northern path to the continent after the World War II, however, ROK had to overcome the limitations of the half-enclosed sea and proceed to the outer world through the sea.

By the effective utilization of the geographical conditions, ROK could achieve a remarkable economic growth in the past. The ROK economy grew to the world top 11<sup>th</sup> in size. The ROK marine-related industries also grew up rapidly. ROK ranks the top in the world in ship building capacity, the fifth in the amount of container handling, the seventh in population engaging in maritime industry, the eighth in fisheries, and the tenth in the amount of maritime transportation. Now, ROK could be called a maritime

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<sup>6</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, March 8, 2005, A34.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK, “UN Convention on Law of the Sea and Agreement on the Implementation of Article 11,” (Seoul: DoFA) January 1996, Chap. 9.



nation.<sup>8</sup>

The second reason that ROK should give a priority to maritime factors lies in the fact that sea is the only strategic space on which ROK should rely for economic prosperity in the future. During the Cold War, maritime environment was the space for military confrontation. But the current situation is totally different from the past.

The potential economic value of the sea near the Korean Peninsular has not been fully investigated by the systemic geological survey.<sup>9</sup> However, it is believed that natural resources such as minerals and petroleum may be buried around the waters of Korean Peninsular and continental shelf. This is the reason why the surrounding nations show a very keen concern on the sea boundary issues.

The ROK's economic fate in the future depends on the stable acquisition of natural resources through the Sea Lane of Communication. ROK surrounded by the seas imports annually 80 billion dollars worth petroleum, mainly from the Middle East, and other resources such as grains, coal, and iron ores through the sea. Without them, the Korean economy cannot be sustained even for several months. Therefore, the sea-lane is the life line for Korea.

The third reason that ROK should put a high priority to maritime factors in developing its national security strategy lies in the facts that most of new security threats are originating from the sea and this trend seems to continue in the future. In fact, while old threats originated from land have been decreased, new threats from the sea have been increased. Korea, a maritime nation, will be continuously exposed to these new threats originated from the sea. Korea should watch closely the maritime security environment around the peninsular as it will become a major region of maritime conflicts and disputes. The development of the surveillance system and precision attack weapons makes it possible to attack opponents' key military facilities and command posts across the sea. The Korean Peninsular with the shallow center of gravity is every vulnerable to this kind of attack. Therefore, the water surrounding the Korean Peninsular should be a forefront to defend attacks from and across the sea.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.knoc.co.kr](http://www.knoc.co.kr) Korea National Oil Corporation. [www.kemco.or.kr](http://www.kemco.or.kr) Korea Energy Management Corporation. Data as of 3 May 2006.

<sup>9</sup> The Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, *KIMS Newsletter*, Vol. 18 (May 19, 2006).

## B. The Analysis of Maritime Threats

With the increased weight of maritime factor in national security, maritime threats also have profoundly affected on the regional security conditions. Currently, nations in Northeast Asia are involved with maritime disputes than any other nations in the world. To all nations in this region, maritime disputes are the main national security concerns. The boundary of the Exclusive Economical Zone (EEZ) among Korea, Japan, and China still remains un-fixed and the demarcation of EEZ will be the very complex and sensitive regional security issue. Moreover, there are many unsolved territorial issues related to the rights over islands among adjacent nations.

Due to this peculiar maritime environment, the SLOC become more important to all nations in this region. Among many, the Malacca Strait is the most important area of concerns to all nations including ROK. This important choke point cannot be controlled and policed solely by United States neither by some neighboring nations. The instability of SLOC in the Northeast Asia region has an enormous impact upon each nation's economy and upon regional security.

This situation explains the reason that the region becomes the area of the fiercest naval arms race in the world.<sup>10</sup> Navies in the Northeast Asia region are reinforcing their naval forces faster than any other navies in the world. In terms of ships equipped with the Aegis combat system, the U.S. Navy has been operating the ships since 1983 and the Japanese Navy has been in possession of its Aegis destroyers since 1993. The Korean Navy also launched its first Aegis class destroyer last May and the ship will be put into operation in 2008.<sup>11</sup>

The waters near the Korean Peninsular are famous for the world's most active submarine operation.<sup>12</sup> ROK Navy possesses 10 submarines while North Korea has 57, Chinese Navy 70, JMSDF 16, U.S. Navy about 35, Russian Navy more than 10, and Taiwan 3 submarines. Most of navies in the region possess the capability to produce submarines in their own shipyards with their own technologies.<sup>13</sup> Old submarines are

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<sup>10</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, May 13, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Stephan Saunders ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 2006-2007* (Surrey, UK: Janes Information Group, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> ROK Navy, *Navy Going with People*, p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> *Jane's Fighting Ships 2006-2007*.



fast replaced with modern submarines and nations are eager to develop more advanced submarines than they currently possess.

The most conspicuous countries in naval building-up in this region are China and Japan. Among the regional navies, the PLA Navy possesses the largest number of ships. The Chinese government has a plan to acquire aircraft carrier by domestic production or by remodeling the carrier purchased from Russia.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, China is trying to build nuclear submarines with the help of Russia. It is expected that along with actively changing maritime strategy, China will build a considerable amount of modern naval platforms in a foreseeable future.<sup>15</sup>

Japan has continuously strengthened the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) on the basis of US-Japan Alliance. The number of Aegis class destroyers will increase from 4 to 8. Two 13,5000 tonnage helicopter operating destroyers will be acquired soon. As for submarines, a new type of submarine equipped with the Swedish Stirling Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) will be launched in 2007.<sup>16</sup> With this naval development, Japan comprises a plan to provide the U.S. Navy with logistics support in its proclaimed 1,000 nautical mile defense concept in case of crisis in the Korean peninsular.

### C. The Future Maritime Strategy for ROK

To be a small but powerful nation, ROK should fast build up economic, diplomatic and military power on the basis of its maritime power. Therefore, a more comprehensive maritime strategy should be developed for the future and the strategy should be equipped with the hardware and software needed for the implementation of it.

Considering the current features of the ROK's maritime strategy, a new maritime strategy should be as follows. First, a more 'active maritime strategy' is required for the future of ROK. In the past, ROK had regarded the sea as a barrier rather than a highway. Now, the sea does not remain a barrier any more. It is the field in which ROK should utilize it to build a rich and powerful nation in the future. Especially,

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<sup>14</sup> *Chosun Ilbo*, August 17, 2005: A16; *Gukbang Ilbo*, August 18, 2005: p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Suk-Jun Yun, "The Chinese Energy Security and Naval Force Development," *The Journal of China and Russia Studies* Vol. 29(2005), p. 23.

considering the increasingly strong competition for the rights over territorial waters and resources among nations in the region, the adoption of a more aggressive maritime strategy is highly desirable for ROK. The maritime strategy should not dwell in 'at the sea'-level strategy, but be a strategy focusing on the perspective of "...from the sea and toward the land." This kind of maritime strategy does not mean the strategy to use naval means to realize its maritime objectives,<sup>17</sup> but the one that should be utilized to accomplish the goals of national security strategy.

Second, a 'cooperative maritime strategy' is also required. The cooperation for the regional security could be achieved by maritime cooperation because the Northeast Asian nations are separated by the seas with the width of less than 500 nautical miles and are tangled with the unsolved disputes concerning maritime boundaries among them. To solve the maritime issues in this region, the three nations, Korea, Japan, and China, need cooperative attitude toward the demarcation EEZ and fishery area boundaries. That one nation cannot protect SLOCs in this region also makes cooperation necessary.

Among many, ROK, the weakest maritime nation in this region, ironically, is in the position to lead the cooperation building in this area. Northeast Asia is an area in which the world's leading maritime powers compete for their national interests. Because of the fierceness of competition and bitter historical memories among them, it will be not easy for one of them to lead others to cooperation. Moreover, Korea is situated in the center of the Northeast Asian water and therefore in the center of competition. The ROK's success in building maritime cooperation with one nation can be the catalyst to stimulate cooperation with and among others. ROK, the weakest nation in the region, can earn in the sea much more through cooperation than competition.<sup>18</sup>

Third, the ROK's maritime strategy should be comprehensive. Due to the very nature of maritime issues, any maritime trouble occurred in one area of the Northeast Asian water does not remain a local security issue between nations directly involved in the dispute but a regional security problem. As an example, a dispute between few

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<sup>16</sup> *Gukbang Ilbo*, June 15, 2006: p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Vern Clark, "Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities," *Proceedings* (October 2002), pp. 32-41.

<sup>18</sup> Suk-Jun Yun, "ROK's Maritime Strategy and Naval Power for the 21st Century," in KIMS ed., *Maritime Conflicts in the 21st Century and ROK's Maritime Strategy* (Seoul: KIMS, 2006): pp. 349-350.



nations on the rights over the Spratly Islands could hinder maritime transportation of other countries including ROK. ROK needs to build a maritime security strategy that considers not only its own national security but also the security of the whole region.

#### 4. The Future Vision of the ROK Navy

##### A. Problems of ROK's Naval Force Building

If there was a principle in the past history of the ROK's naval force building, it was to stick to building naval forces only to defeat the North Korean maritime threats. This resulted in naval force structure consisting of surface combatants. This kind of force building resulted in force structure consisted of small surface combatants, which is suitable for sea control operations near the Korean peninsula. Those forces consisted of frigates, corvettes, patrol boats, and other support vessels were used to perform coastal operations such as anti-surface warfare and anti-submarine warfare. The development of this kind of naval force was attributed in part to the ground combat-centered military strategy that focused on the establishment of strong ground forces to counter land threats from the massive and conventional North Korean military forces. To support the military strategy, the ROK navy had to take the coastal defense strategy. Thus, the naval force structure that was consisted of many small patrol boats was the result of the Korean military strategy and corresponding naval strategy.

This type of naval force building has brought the ROK Navy many problems. First, the ROK Navy became an extremely unbalanced force structure. To counter the North Korean surface ships and conventional submarines, the Korean navy has kept a number of corvettes and frigates suitable for anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare. To deter maritime infiltration of the North Korean special forces, the Korean Navy had to install radar surveillance systems along the entire coastal areas including islands and also deploy many patrol boats along the entire coastline.<sup>19</sup>

The second problem is that the South Korean navy possessed too many slow speed amphibious ships. Due to a memory of the great success at Incheon during the Korean War, the Korean navy has long kept the traditional concept of amphibious

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<sup>19</sup> Young-Oh Kang, "The Analysis of the Korean Naval Forces," *Strategy 21*, Vol 7(Spring-Summer, 2001): pp. 130-135.

operation based on the ship-to-shore maneuvering. This made the Korean navy be late to accept a new type of amphibious operations based on ship-to-objective maneuvering. This also hinders early introduction of new types of amphibious vessels that fit to the contemporary amphibious operations.<sup>20</sup>

The third problem is that although the Korean navy had already secured many naval aircrafts, most of them were limited to rotary wing aircrafts to perform ASW operations. Moreover, there was shortage of ships capable of carrying helicopters. Therefore, the ROK Navy had to deploy those helicopters to islands to overcome the limitation of short operational ranges.

Forth, following the ground combat-centered military strategy, the Korean navy utilized the Marine Corps units as ground forces rather than amphibious forces. The ROK Navy deployed marine units Kimpo and 5 islands in the West Sea to defend that area. This led to the decrease of their amphibious operation capability. Marine corps could not develop its own doctrines for effective amphibious operations and they had to equip with the equipments inappropriate for the amphibious operations.

## B. Directions for Force Building of the ROK Navy

To build naval force for the future, the Korean navy should focus on the following objectives and directions of force building. First, the ROK Navy should build three-dimensional task fleet. For the Korean Navy, like other contemporary navies in the world, a new operational concept based on maneuvering operation is needed. Moreover, ROK required naval force that could operate outside the Korean theatre of operations to defend national interests in remote areas. To be able to do all kinds of component operations independently in the ocean for a given period, the Korean navy needs to have well balanced naval forces. These forces may include amphibious landing ship (LPH), destroyers (KDX), conventional submarines (SS) and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (P-3).<sup>21</sup>

Second, the Korean navy has to build-up the Korean style force structure fit to

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<sup>20</sup> ROK Marine Corps, *Marine Corps VISION 2025 : NEW WARRIOR 21* (Daejeon: ROKMC HQs, 2001), p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> ROK Navy, *Navy Going with People*, p. 32.



the Korean maritime environment and based on the threat evaluation peculiar to the environment. South Korea currently possesses the world's top class information and communications technologies and capability to put them into the production of high-quality equipments. If South Korea effectively utilizes those technologies to naval platforms building, it is possible for Korea to have a naval force to fit the Korean maritime environment.

Third, it is necessary for the Korean navy to secure a harmony between traditional and modern platforms. The South Korea should meet both the traditional maritime threats, mainly from the North Korea, and the new type of threats emerged from the changing security environment. And the Korean navy is keeping both aged maritime platforms to face the traditional threats and platforms equipped with the cutting-edge weapon systems. Conventional forces can be effectively utilized for coastal defense, even if it is limited in power projection. Moreover, even if the Network Centric Warfare (NCW) is a new concept, the traditional naval force can be mobilized for NCW.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the Korean navy should build a naval force that can support well the ROK-US alliance. The United States anticipates as much supports as possible from the ROK Navy in conducting the war against terror. The ROK navy has responded to the United States' request by dispatching amphibious ships to the area of disasters or crisis. If the US Navy performs counter-terror operations near the Korean peninsular, the ROK Navy has to have a capability to act as the role of naval sea base. The ROK Navy's LPH or AOEs could be the forces to accomplish the role.<sup>23</sup>

### C. The Naval Force Development Plan of the ROK Navy

The essence of the long-term vision of the Defense Reform 2020 is to construct a self-reliant advanced military force that can assure peace and prosperity in the Korean Peninsular. This could be achieved by the building of technology-oriented force

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<sup>22</sup> David S. Alberts and others, *Understanding of Information Age Warfare*, CCRP Publication Series, 2001. The basic idea of NCW can be found in any book deals with NCW. The main concept is that it encompasses hardware and also software to complete NCW.

<sup>23</sup> Young-Oh Kang, "The Analysis of the Korean Naval Force," pp. 130-135.

structure. This also means the construction of an advanced defense capability sufficient for self-defense.<sup>24</sup> The development plan for the ROK Navy should go with the Defense Reform 2020. With the increased operational capability of the three-dimensional force on surface, underwater and in the air, the Korean navy will be transformed from the coastal navy to the navy to secure national interests in high sea. To do this, the Korean navy is endeavoring to change its organizational structure and to build new naval bases and platforms,

#### (1) Organizational changes and base construction

The unit structure will shift from the current 3 fleet commands, 1 submarine flotilla, and 1 air wing to 3 fleet commands, 1 submarine command, 1 air command, and 1 Task Flotilla (TF). These changes are designed to develop the ROK Navy's maneuver unit structure. In terms of manpower, Marine Corp will be cut the strength by 4000 men. Overall, the ROK Navy and Marine Corp will keep 64,000 men in total.<sup>25</sup>

With the creation of the Task Flotilla, the operational concept of ROKN will be changed from that of the traditional defensive line patrol operations into that of the network centric and multidimensional maneuver operations. According to the change of operational concept, the TF structure should be changed into the task fleet structure in the long run. The fleet should have at least three TFs and one of them will be always on patrol the southern area of Cheju Island. To effectively utilize the task fleet, additional organizations to perform component operations such as logistics, mine warfare, special warfare operations and salvage operations are needed. The Figure 1 shows the summary of the organizational change of the ROK Navy.

The Korean Navy needs additional operational base to accommodate the task fleet forces. As a result of ROK Navy's endeavor to build a new base for the past several years, at last the Navy could draw a consensus from the residents of Cheju Island on the construction of the base on May 2007, which was a final obstacle to build a new base in Cheju. When the construction of the base completes, the Korean navy could command a more active maritime operations to defend the southern SLOC and to

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<sup>24</sup> The Ministry of National Defense, *Defense White Paper 2006* (Seoul: MND, 2006), pp. 47-50.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



respond quickly to any disputes that may happen in the areas of maritime boundaries near the East China Sea and Cheju Island.

The Marine Corp will be 2 division command structure with the reduction of 1 brigade. The currently ground force-like Marine Corps structure will be changed into the unit structure capable of performing multidimensional maneuver operations. And the Marine Corps will be transformed into a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) with quicker mobility and flexibility. This change will be supported by an Air Wing and Logistic Command.<sup>26</sup> This structural change will enable the ROK Marine Corp to become a multi purpose Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to support national security strategy.

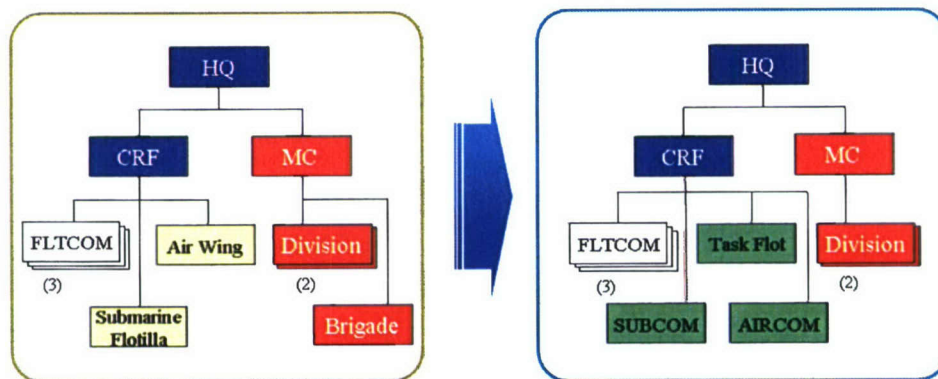


Figure 1: Changes in Naval Organization

\* Source: The Ministry of National Defense, “Defense Reform 2020 – How It Will Be Actually Executed” (Nov. 10, 2005), p.16.

## (2) Major platforms building

The force development plan for the Korean Navy could be categorized into the three areas: surface, subsurface, air and amphibious forces. First, the development plan of surface combatants orients to build the multi-purposed platforms that have land attack, air defense, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities not only in the littoral areas but also in high seas. The first Aegis class destroyer (KDX-III) was launched on May 2007, and the ROK Navy plans to have a total of 3 Aegis ships by

<sup>26</sup> ROK Marine Corps, “ROK MC’s Vision 2025: NEW WARRIOR 21.”

2012. With the procurement of this type of vessels, the Korean navy will have the capability to contribute to the joint operations. The ships could help the ground and the air force with the capabilities of air defense and long-range precession attacks from the sea. The ROK Navy also launched a study to develop a more capable next-generation combatant that can surpass the KDX-III class.

To replace the former Ul-san class frigates, the Korean navy will build 6 next-generation frigates (FFX) by 2015. The basic design will start in 2007 and the first ship will be in the water in 2011. The cutting-edge stealth design to increase survival ability will be applied to FFX and the tonnage will be increased up to 3000 tons to accommodate more equipments.

The Korean Navy will also build more LPHs. Almost all navies in the world are building landing ships or large transportation ships, because that the operating costs of these ships are much less than that of aircraft carriers.<sup>27</sup> San Antonio class LPD of the US Navy, the French Mistral class amphibious ship, British Albion class, Spanish Strategic Projection ship, and Dokdo class (LPH) of the ROK Navy are the examples of modern type of LPH.<sup>28</sup> The ROK Navy will build two more Dokdo class ships so that at least one ship could always be ready for operations. The large transport ships can be used not only for peacekeeping operations, large-scale disaster relief operations, and the combined exercises with the allies, but for the strategic maritime transport and amphibious operations during war and many other purposes. The demand of LPH seems to be increased in the future.

To increase the stability and efficiency of mine countermeasure operations, the acquisition of more mine countermeasure forces are required for the ROK Navy. The ROK Navy already built 3 MSHs and has a plan to acquire 3 more ships. To have the airborne mine countermeasure (AMCM) capability, the Korean Navy started the MH-X

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<sup>27</sup> An aircraft carrier should have at least 40 aircrafts to have air-defense and surface strike capabilities. After World War II, the British Navy introduced light aircraft carrier because it had an idea to accommodate V-STOLs. However, due to the limited number of aircrafts and operational range, the Royal Navy is trying to build a larger carrier that could accommodate maximum 80 aircrafts. During the Iraq War, the British utilized the light carrier as an sea base for the maritime special operation units. The United States also the same experience to use the light carrier *Kittyhawk* as a sea base for the special operation force to infiltrate from the Arabic Sea to the land.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher P. Cavas, "Warfare Renaissance: Expeditionary Capabilities Drive Procurement," *Defense News* (April 3, 2006), pp.11-12.



program.

The ROK Navy also needs several underway replenishment platforms. The ROK Navy is planning to have the three-dimensional operation capability in high sea. Hence, the acquisition of logistics platform with Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) capability is essential. This kind of platforms could be utilized to support the US ships that will be deployed long in this region in case of crises and will enhance the cooperation between the US and ROK navies.

Second, the underwater platform is the force to give the weak navies such as the Korean Navy with some asymmetrical strategic leverage to deter major naval powers' attack. The ROK Navy is endeavoring to have the advanced submarines in a shortest time. The first type 214-type submarine equipped with the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system was launched in June 2006 and the Korean Navy will build 5 more 214 class submarines. The ROK Navy also secured the initial budget of 6.2 million dollars to start the next generation submarine program.<sup>29</sup> The next generation submarines should have the strategic land attack capability with the highly advanced propulsion system. To have a strategic value, this type of submarine must be built with Korea's own independent technologies. If the Korean Navy successfully develops the next generation submarine independently, Korea may have the strategic deterrent capability and can come true its dream to be a small but strong nation.

Third, it is necessary for the ROK Navy to acquire the sufficient air surveillance capability to be freed from the routines of the surface units-centered patrol operations. The most urgent force for this is the maritime airborne early-warning aircraft equipped with jet engine. This force will also provide the ROK Navy with a capability to counter adversary airplanes at sea.

Forth, the ROK Navy is required to have a certain level of independent amphibious force. The ROK's current concept of amphibious operation was developed on the basis of a hypothesis that the amphibious operations in the Korean Peninsular will be conducted by the combined forces of the US and the ROK forces. To have the independent amphibious operation capability, the ROK Navy and Marine Corps should setup first the concept of independent amphibious operation. To have the independent

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<sup>29</sup> *Gukbang Ilbo*, June 29, 2006, p. 2.

amphibious operations capability, there also need the independent amphibious operation forces such as large transport ships (LPH), amphibious transports, amphibious support ships, and etc. To fill up the shortage of amphibious forces for independent operations, it also needs wisdom to utilize commercial vessels as the substitute force for the amphibious landing and support ships.<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The security environment surrounding the Korean peninsular has been dramatically changing and new security threats have been spreading in a very complex and diverse manner. Accordingly, the ROK is required to construct a new and more comprehensive national security strategy. As the sea becomes a more important strategic space for the survival and prosperity of the ROK, the maritime strategy should be the core of the ROK's national security strategy.

According to the increased importance of the sea, the ROK Navy requires a more active, cooperative, and comprehensive maritime strategy to deter the future wars from the sea and to contribute to building the stable and peaceful region. Especially, to make the stable and peaceful Northeast Asian region, the ROK should takes, on the basis of the ROK-US alliance, the role of balancer that leads maritime cooperation among nations in the region.

For the embodiment of this maritime strategy, the ROK Navy should continuously develop the naval force reinforcement plan to the direction that I suggested above. The enhanced maritime security strategy and the increased capability of the ROK naval force will assure the ROK's national security. The ROK Navy equipped with the capability to carry out the future wartime missions will contribute to building the regional peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Furthermore, the ROK Navy can be the core military force to lead the maritime security cooperation in the whole Pacific region in the 21st century.

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<sup>30</sup> The Korean Army utilized the US Army's fast transportation ships to move the equipments of the mechanized combat units to the Eastern coast in the RSOI exercise. Overview in The Ministry of National Defense, *The Journal of Defense* (March 2005).



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# “ROK Navy Experiences in cooperation with U.S. Navy and Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force”

RADM(ret). Sang-ki HAN

June 22, 2007

## 1. Foreword

I joined the Republic of Korea Navy in the 1960's when the Democratic bloc led by the U.S. and the Communist bloc headed by the Soviet Union were fiercely contending with each other in expanding their influence all over the world.

Tedious fightings were going on in Vietnam and two Koreas, South and North on Korean peninsula, were still confronting with animosity in the ceasefire state of the Korean War (1950-1953).

The United States found the situation so acute that it had to

contain the Soviet expansion on the Korean peninsula.

The ROK Navy was created from “nothing” by our seniors including Admiral Won-il Sohn on Nov. 1945. just after the WWII.

There were no men who had any experience of naval life, no ships, no logistic supplies, no maintenance facilities, no educational facilities, and no manuals.

Just nothing whatsoever.

There were only one naval port in Chin hae that Japanese navy used and a 287-ton patrol craft which Japanese navy stopped to construct.

The U.S. Navy started to provide the newly born ROK Navy with two landing craft, one oiler, five JMS, and seventeen YMS, along with ships handling and maintenance technology.

In 1949, Admiral Sohn strongly longing for combatant conducted fund raising campaign among naval officers and men to buy ships from the U.S. Navy. Their wives also participated



in the campaign by doing needleworks and various jobs.

He collected 15,000 dollars and President Seung-man Rhee who was impressed by the Navy's strong desire and fund raising, helped him by allowing 45,000 dollars to make total 60,000 dollars.

Admiral Sohn could buy one PC class ship. He named the ship "Mountain White Head" after the great mountain located on the border of Korea & China in advance.

The ship's name he bought at U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, was "Ensign White Head."

What a chance coincidence!

They had named the ship after Ensign White Head killed in action in World War II for the training ship of the Academy.

It became the very first combatant ship of the ROK Navy in history! And he purchased three more PCs and accepted ships from U.S. Navy.

The ROK Navy started to change its appearance.

On this course, the U.S. Navy worked as a model for the

Korean Navy, which was quite natural.

Since its foundation, the ROK Navy has continued to develop and improve its combat power, maintenance, logistic support, administration, ships handling, etc. largely thanks to the help of U.S. Naval advisory group in Korea and the dedicated services of its own officers and sailors who were educated and trained in the U.S. Naval schools as well.

All in all, the ROK Navy has attributed its growth to the U.S. Navy.

The U.S. Navy has been good opportunities for the ROK Navy to learn the advanced naval systems.

Many of the ROK naval officers appreciate the U.S. Navy for this till nowadays.

Any newly commissioned naval officers who demonstrated good command of military English or extraordinary performance of radio voice procedures during the combined ASW or other exercises, were surely recognized as “excellent officers.”



Officers studied very hard with notebooks which were filled with the U.S. Navy ASW tactics and many abbreviated words of the U.S. naval terms.

Study in U.S. naval schools was always one of the fancy dreams of any Korean naval officers to realize.

## 2. ROK Navy's Experiences in cooperation with U.S. Navy.

Lots of North Korean submarines built just after Korean War, were big threat to ROK navy which had none of them. Therefore the more ASW exercises were conducted than others.

US navy deployed a few diesel submarines for combined exercises every year. Many of naval officers were very much interested in submarine and they used to do mock-up exercises which are called Attack Teacher in order to get a good result from exercise with real submarine.

CIC mock-up exercises for maneuvering were also conducted intensively as well as ASW exercise.

The ROK Navy had successfully adapted itself to the U.S. Naval operational procedures, tactics, and doctrines.

Those days, most of the exercises were conducted in the forms of Attack Teacher or CIC mock-up, using various



mock-up equipments.

In recent years, those muck-up exercises are developed in the types of computer simulation or war games.

The SALVEX for salvage and MCM exercises have been regularly conducted as typical form of combined exercise with US navy in coastal waters of Korean peninsula.

The first combined explosive disposal exercise, EODEX was conducted from 1969. The PIBLEX, combined amphibious exercise from 1972, and the SEALEX, a combined SEAL team exercise from 1973 followed, and it continues even these days.

The ROK navy has been able to learn lots of exercise procedures and naval doctrines through those combined exercises with US navy.

These greatly contributed to the strengthening of combat capability of the ROK navy.

In the 1970's frequent infiltrations at sea by the North Korean spy boats made the ROK navy build more high-speed patrol craft in order to conduct many counter-spy infiltration

operations independently by Korean navy.

In 1990 I had the honor to take part in the RIMPAC exercise, the first participation by the ROK Navy in history with two frigates, as commanding officer of flag ship.

Although the ROK navy was well experienced navy through many combined exercises with U.S. navy in the coastal water of the Korean peninsula, it was quite a challenge to the ROK navy to participate a lengthy exercise in Hawaiian area where its own maintenance facility was not available.

To the ROK navy well adapted to inshore pre-exercise with scenarios, the first RIMPAC exercise a multi-national and non-scenario based, was full of worries.

Above all, the RIMPAC was combined one in which any wrong maneuvering might result in a big collision.

That was a really great panic!

However, we thoroughly prepared the exercise for months and managed to conduct it with great success.

We did not make any bit of mistake in ships maneuvering



and successfully finished the exercise.

An episode!

During the combined exercises with the Royal Navy and Australian Navy, Korean naval officers found very hard to understand their English which was totally different from American English accent.

It took some time for the Korean sailors to overcome “language barrier in two different English.”

We did a good job in naval gun fire support which we could not conduct in Korea, well hit the target with harpoon missile in real situation.

We could achieve good results applying mock-up exercises for preparation of real operational exercises.

After the exercise evaluation, we conducted also the first-ever FORACS test to examine the performance capabilities of all equipment so that we upgraded the combat capabilities of our navy by one step higher.

For that, our officers and sailors upon returning home were

awarded with medals and citations.

In the 1990's the ROK Navy recorded to possess

P-3C maritime patrol craft, Lynx ASW helicopters and 209 class diesel submarines with surface ships built in Korean Shipbuilding Company.

Having those 3-dimensional forces, the ROK navy has conducted a variety of combined exercises with the U.S. navy.

SHAREM for combined ASW maritime search exercise in 1994, SUBEX for combined submarine exercise in 1995, SEASURVEX for combined maritime patrol craft exercise in 1996, and the C-SOF for combined anti-special forces exercise in 1997, are the examples of the remarkable changes in this field.



### 3. ROK navy experiences in cooperation with JMSDF

The so-called “historical problems” and “territorial issue” have made the ROK and Japan difficult to start military cooperation between them.

The military leadership and working-level action officers of the two nations, while having well understood the need for such military cooperation, have always thought it premature to promote right now.

In fact, some of the Koreans had not been in favor of JMSDF ship’s visit to a Korean port with its own national flag. The same reason tells why the Japanese Emperor’s visit to Korea has not been made yet.

I served in Tokyo as naval attaché at our embassy from 1985 to 1988, the year of the Seoul Olympic Games.

My predecessors had made quite an effort to realize the exchange of port visits of naval midshipmen’s cruise training

unit, not to mention the exchange visits of two nations' navy chiefs for years.

Military cooperation between two countries normally starts from the exchanges of personnel followed by various conferences, meetings and port calls by navy ships, etc.

When I arrived in Tokyo, the intelligence exchange conference between defense ministries annually was the unique military cooperation between the two nations.

Nothing more than that.

For this the existing intelligence exchange meetings were resourceful cooperation structure, particularly keeping in mind of successful launch of the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul

At last, Admiral NAGADA, then the chief of Staff, JMSDF, visited Korea in 1986, and return visit of Admiral Sang-Wha CHOI, then the chief of naval Operations, ROK Navy was made in 1987.

Now a momentum for active personnel exchange was provided.



Upon returning home, Admiral NAGADA spoke about the warm hospitality he received in Korea and disciplines of the ROK Navy he carefully watched during the visit to all the JMSDF admirals.

I was happy to accept appreciations and congratulatory remarks from Japanese captains and admirals for some days.

Based on this experience, followed the Air Force Academy cadets' visit in 2000, the Naval Academy midshipman's visit, the Military Academy cadets and the staff college students' visit in 2001.

In 1994, I had an honor to command the first-ever ship visit to the port of Tokyo with ROK Navy ships of cruise training unit for midshipmen.

The CNO of the ROK Navy was in favor of Yokoska, as the venue for this first historical navy ship's visit, while the chief of staff JMSDF preferred the port of Tokyo since he welcomed at the level of JMSDF head.

The welcoming ceremony by chief of staff, JMSDF was held

in Tokyo with great hospitality after all.

Both Korean and Japanese newspapers and major media carried our ship's visit on the top page headlines.

That was not an ordinary ship's visit, but a historical event which opened the door to carry out genuine military cooperation and signified realistic military exchanges between the two nations.

Since that time, the cooperation between ROK Navy and JMSDF has developed into a combined SALEX from August, 1999, and navy ship's port visit of cruising unit occurs almost every year.

These are all the examples of the actively on-going military exchanges and cooperation between Korea and Japan.

However, still many of Koreans, particularly the victims of Japanese aggressive wars in the past, are very much anxious about the possibility of Japan's becoming major military power and taking over the entire or part of the U.S. military role in NE Asia.



They watch the recent change with deep concerns.

### 3. Concluding Remark

The U.S. navy has greatly supported the ROK navy in the course of half-century long period in developing their three dimensional naval power at sea, in the air and under water.

The U.S. has remained a close friend and a strong ally of the Republic of Korea, along with Japan in North East Asia.

In the 2000's the ROK-US naval relationship has also been changing from one-way U.S. support into mutually complementing cooperative relationship.

Although some part of the people in Korea have shown their inclination of anti-American and pro-north Korean sentiment in recent year and voiced the need of the transformation of wartime operational control, however the majority of south Koreans still do wish to sustain a strong military cooperation with the United States.

Under the present circumstances when North Korea has not changed its attitude in military redeployment, building up of

war potential, searching for antagonistic policy toward the south and particularly as far as it holds nuclear bombs or material, it is absolutely inevitable to keep the present status of wartime operational control, the ROK-US combined forces command structure and the military cooperation with the United States.

The simply passing phenomenon occurred in Korean society, can not break down the two countries' blood-sharing comradeship in the Korean war and Vietnam war.

Under the US security umbrella for many years, Japan was able to achieve remarkable economic growth and surfaced as the second largest economic power of the world.

Thanks to this economic power, Japan also could have consolidated its defense capability changing its self-defense force into a full-fledged military power.

Without giving any impetus to the neighboring states, Japan has been reinforcing its military strength on the one hand while putting its domestic legal structures in good order on the



other.

Recently, Japan elevated the status of the Self Defense Agency up to Self Defense Department, did not use the concept of so-called Exclusively Defensive Security any more and heightened its voice to approve the right of collective self-defense.

The effort to revise of the 'Peace Constitution' and their capability of nuclear weapons making whenever they judge and decide its necessity, could possibly make Japan a "major military power.'

In the meantime, other elements such as North Korea's long-range missiles, nuclear weapon, and the quest for enhanced role of JSDF to replace some part of the US strategic role in northeast Asia, also work to help reinforce Japan's military strength in the near future.

Sixty years ago Japan and the United States fought against each other. Now Japan has become a political, economic, and military companion to the United States, no less close than the

United Kingdom.

Korea and Japan, in spite of some conflicting issues such as past history, Dokdo island, EEZ boundary, textbooks, and Yaskuni shrine worshipping etc. are also trustful companions which have shared the value of free democracy and market economy for long time.

We together should resolve all conflicting issues existing among us, and further develop the present ROK-US, US-Japan and ROK-Japan military cooperation into a tripartite ROK-US-Japanese military cooperation structure.

Thank you for your patience.



**The ROK Navy's Views on  
SLOC Security and Humanitarian Assistance:  
An Overview and Critique**

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***[DRAFT: NOT FOR CITATION]***

Prepared for presentation at the "The Future of ROK Navy-U.S. Navy Cooperation" co-organized by the Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy (KIMS) and the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) and to be held at Doubletree Alana Hotel, Honolulu, Hawaii, June 22, 2007.

South Korea (the Republic of Korea) is a virtual island country. Its limitations in landmass and resources notwithstanding, the ROK now embodies the world's 11<sup>th</sup> largest economy and tenth largest trading-nation status. By the end of 2005 it also held the largest shipbuilding capacity and the fifth largest cargo processing capacity in the world. The other side of these impressive achievements is a growing dependency on seaborne trade: Foreign trade occupied approximately 70 percent of its 1.18 trillion-dollar GDP in 2006 and a whopping 99.7 percent of its trade was conducted via sea routes. If the ROK's reliance on overseas sources on such strategic material as crude oil (100 percent), raw steel (90 percent), and food (73 percent) are counted up, it is no exaggeration to say that the protection of the sea line of communication is a life-and-death issue of the Republic. Thus, the importance of SLOC security is unquestioned.

Perhaps equally, if not more, telling is the lack of viable options for the ROK's SLOC protection in both peacetime and wartime. The three major entities, whose publications this study is deduced from, are the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MOMAF), the ROK Navy (ROKN), the Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy (KIMS), and the SLOC Study Group-Korea. Judging from their on-line and off-line sources made available to the public, it becomes evident that despite their wide-ranging activities and enormous body of literature on maritime affairs, few have approached the issue of SLOC security in a realistic manner. More often than not, they identify and list traditional and nontraditional threats to the safety of the ROK and uncharacteristically call for its own and allied capability, maritime CBMs, and multilateral security cooperation.



The ROKN's official website, for one thing, has identified five major roles that are germane to its missions: war deterrence, maritime control, SLOC protection, military power projection, and assistance to the nation's foreign policy and its national prestige. But the ways and means of achieving SLOC security are nowhere found in the ocean of information. The MOMAF's website fares no better. For another, while the KIMS has since 1997 served as a magnet for all maritime/naval issues in Korea, its attention to the SLOC has been of recent origin, and its flagship publication, *Strategy 21*, carries only a handful of articles on SLOC security for the past ten years. For still another, the SLOC Study Group-Korea has been a pioneering scholarly effort founded in as early as 1981 and published series of single volumes and conference proceedings in the form of East and West Studies Series at Yonsei University. Due to the irregular flow of funding, however, the Group has now ceased to publish any of its own and exists all but in name.

A glance at the state of the field on Korea's SLOC research works strongly indicates a combination of factors that have made the field as it is today. One is the narrow pool of military and civilian experts on the subject—coupled with the widespread yet distorted perception in Korea that it should be dealt with by the navy personnel. Another is the lack of “camaraderie” with other services or its status in a military hierarchy compounded by its sporadic interactions with the academic community. Still another is an assortment of issues that are internal to the ROKN. Faced with ever-increasing and more demanding tasks, it is often next to impossible to devote its limited resources to any single issue.

With this in mind, this brief essay offers an overview on the ROKN's views on its SLOC security. More specifically, it describes the main features of the ROK's maritime

geography as well as of its SLOCs, which are critical to an understanding of the issues involved. The next section then addresses a host of commercial and military challenges to the SLOC and lingering problems that are discernible from the extant literature. Next will be a brief comment on the ROK and its navy's conception of overseas humanitarian assistance, an area that is quite new to them. Finally, this essay concludes with a few suggestions to move forward the ongoing discussions on SLOC security to a new height.

### **Its Maritime Geography and Major SLOCs**

Our planet has the wrong name. Our ancestors named it Earth, after the land they found all around them....If the ancients had known what the earth is really like they undoubtedly would have named it Ocean after the tremendous areas of water that cover 70.8 percent of its surface.

Leonard Engel from *The Sea*

The ROK shares with China the Yellow Sea and East China Sea to its west and with Japan the East Sea to its southeast. Given its small landmass—slightly larger than Indiana, the ROK has a rather long coastline of 11,542 kilometers and a total of about 3,200 islands. The Yellow Sea lies between the Korean Peninsula and East China Sea and is a shallow sea with an average depth of 100 meters. In particular, the body of water between Shanghai and the Cheju Island—except in the vicinity of the latter—is only 24-meter deep and is called a “nightmare” for underwater operations. The East Sea—located to the southeast of the peninsula has an average depth of 2,000 meters and is called a “Big Lake” with only four outlets.



Situated at geostrategic and economic crossroads, the Korean peninsula has long been an intersection of conflicting interests of four major powers. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial Japan fought there with the Qing (1894-95) and with Russia (1904-05), thus taking Korea as its colony for 35 years. It was also there that the fledgling PRC confronted the mighty U.S. 50-some years ago. Korea's checkered history speaks volumes about the importance of its geographical location in the eyes of continental and maritime powers. Compared with the bygone days of colonialization, it has taken on a new relevance in light of the huge and growing economic stakes in the new century.

According to the ROKN's *Glossary of the Terms of Maritime Strategy*, the SLOCs refer only to the major sea routes used for commercial transportation in peacetime and for war sustainability in wartime. The ROKN has identified four major SLOCs of the ROK without any level of details. Therefore, their specific characteristics and the likely threats to them have to be deduced from the various writings of ROK navy personnel. They can be summed up as follows:

- The Korea-China Sea Lane that directly connects the two countries' major ports. As China now has emerged as the ROK's "four No. 1s": its largest trading partner, its largest export market, and its largest trade-surplus source, and its top outbound investment destination, the importance of this sea lane is certain to grow in the foreseeable future. It is, however, also this sea lane that involves a litany of illegal activities, maritime incidents, and disputed claims. In wartime, while its probability is quite low, the NKPA and the PLA's heavy concentration of military assets could immediately endanger this sea lane.

- The Southwest Sea Lane reaches as far as the Middle East, Europe, and Africa via East and South China Seas. This is the major “Oil SLOC,” as the ROK almost totally depends on this sea lane for crude oil imports. In particular this sea lane is known for chokepoints (i.e., Taiwan, Bashi, and Malacca Straits), territorial disputes (South China Sea), and piracy. In spite of its treacherous nature, this SLOC remains rather tranquil due mainly to international collaboration among maritime states and to the sea control provided by the U.S. naval presence in the region. On a different note, because of its strategic importance to the ROK as well as of overly patriotic sentiments some Korean naval commentators aired the necessity for far-away SLOC protection in public fora. But it indeed takes a long mental leap to expect such a noble idea to come true in the foreseeable future. Contrary to the purpose of such attempts, they may jeopardize the security of this sea lane.
- The Southeast Sea Lane is also a long haul that passes by south of Japan, Hawaii and goes to North and South America. It is not only a traditional commercial route to the U.S. and Latin America but also the critical passage for U.S. augmentation forces should a war or contingency occur in the AOR of the U.S. Pacific Command. While the maritime traffic is heavy between south of Japan and Guam, its safety is guaranteed by U.S. naval presence.
- The Korea-Japan Sea Lane directly links the two countries for both commercial and wartime purposes. In particular, this sea lane has a direct bearing on the ROK-U.S Combined Forces’ war sustainability. Japan’s rear-



area support from such bases as Yokosuka, Yokoda, and Sasebo in a Korean conflict remains critical to the allied warfighting capability.

The criticality of the security of the four SLOCs for the wealth and health of the ROK has generated a handful of studies that have assessed the impacts of SLOC disruptions on the Korean economy. On the civilian side, the MOMAF and the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET) have commissioned such reports in terms of individual sector, its domino effects, and its overall impact on the national economy. None of the publication that are available to this author, however, has looked at the contingency in a series of phased-time scenarios. Nor do they seem to be interested in analyzing the level and kind of SLOC disruptions and their possible social and military consequences. In a sharp contrast, the ROKN's published and commissioned reports have mostly focused on a variety of measures to protect the SLOCs in military and strategic terms. Included in their areas of concern are oil security, UNCLOS, maritime disputes, and other regional navies' SLOC security.

### **Emerging Security Trends and Drifting Old Thinking**

It is trite yet true to note that in the post-Cold-War security environment the navy is tasked to deal with a wider spectrum of conflict than in the past. While the traditional threats are by definition familiar to begin with (e.g., North Korea) and call for military and diplomatic responses, it is much harder to identify and define new security threats. They often transcend national boundaries and go beyond the military sphere. An array of both traditional and nontraditional threats to SLOC protection might include piracy,

maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, maritime conflicts, fishery disputes, and even natural disasters. The diverse causes of new threats to SLOC security are often compounded by such other factors as their duration, their intensity, and the areas of SLOC disruptions. It is this complication of present-day SLOC security, against which the ROKN's role and limitations should be assessed.

At least three types of thinking or approaches seem to be pervasive in the navy's analysis of SLOC security. One is a traditional approach that begins with an assessment on the new developments in the balance of military power in East Asia and ends with a litany of politico-military solutions. Typical to such an approach are the listings of naval order of battle, a force-on-force comparison of naval power, and the "bean counting" of individual weapon systems and platforms of the four major powers in the theater. Most papers delivered by active-duty and retired members of the navy in the Ninth International Sea Power Symposium in July 2005 fall into this category. Just in case his audience misses the point, for instance, navy analyst Hyun Ki Kim offered a thorough listing of individual weapons and platforms of over 20 countries in the region for a period from 1985 to 2005! Many other navy writings are less ambitious than this but similar to each other in contents and suggestions.

Another is an amalgam of theoretical, historical, and legal perspectives related to SLOC security. At one end of the spectrum lies a comprehensive analysis on the conceptual and theoretical review on SLOC security, the major characteristics of the ROK's SLOCs, and the correlation between the level of tensions and regional militarization. Several writings of Duk-Ki Kim, now the commander of the ROK's first-ever Aegis destroyer, fit this school of thoughts. Others who are not the members of the military are specific in discussing SLOC and maritime-security issues. Professors Jin



Hyun Paik and Seo-Hang Lee—internationally renowned scholars on international law and multilateral security, respectively—bring their expertise to bear upon SLOC study. As noted above, however, scholarly efforts on this importance issue have mostly discontinued in recent years.

Still another, if not the last, takes a head-on approach on the ROK's SLOC security. According to RADM Ho-Sub Jung, the ROKN must be able to understand the goals of peacetime and wartime SLOC security before devising the right strategies. In peacetime, he calls for improved maritime situational awareness, shared C4ISR with Korea Coast Guard, and the unity of doctrines, weapons, and logistics between them. In particular, given its current status as a coastal navy and the likelihood of SLOC vulnerability near the shore, the ROKN must be able to secure the waters contiguous to the peninsula first before discussing long-range escort fleet. In time of crisis or war, the ROKN's SLOC protections will be a daunting task ranging from North Korea's submarines, mines, and SOFs. It is thus necessary to secure intelligence, ASW and mine-sweeping capability of its own or of allied assets of the U.S. navy.

### **The Question of Overseas Humanitarian Assistance**

By definition, overseas humanitarian assistance is a challenging task operating far from the home ports, calling for inter-service coordination, and combining civilian and military assets. More often than not, there are no host-nation support or local infrastructure to rely on. These types of relief operations thus require an effective command and control and logistics capability. The massive humanitarian relief efforts in

the wake of Southeast Asian tsunami amply demonstrate the above points. The ROKN's experiences in such types of massive relief operations are limited, however.

The ROK armed forces have long taken part in a variety of disaster-relief operations in Korea and beyond. According to its *Defense White Paper 2006*, the ROK MND has concluded a series of disaster-relief cooperation agreements with its civilian counterparts, engaged in PR efforts for the prevention and management of national disasters, and operated a total of 210 disaster control offices throughout the military units. For the period from 2002 to 2006, moreover, the military has employed a total of 2.34-million manpower and 64,901 equipment to domestic relief operations and rescued 320 lives and helped to restore a countless number of devastated properties. But the role of the navy in such domestic operations is quite limited as land routes are mostly utilized.

With the exception of UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), however, the ROKN's hands-on experiences in international aid operations are not extensive and confined to a few cases: Since 2004 the ROKN contributed to international aid operations for the victims and disaster-hit areas in the cases of Southeast Asian tsunami and typhoons as well as the earthquakes in Indonesia and Afghanistan. Important as they are for both humanitarian and learning purposes, it is hard to systematically analyze their logistics lessons with the limitations of data available. The ROK and its navy's far greater participation in PKO activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and African countries, in conjunction with basic humanitarian assistance training, will further improve its response capabilities when needed in the future.

## **The ROKN's Tasks Ahead**



This brief essay has offered an overview of the ROKN's views on SLOC security based on a textual analysis of the navy's publications and raised some doubts in the spirit of constructive criticism. Much of the available sources indicate an overly "threat-based" analysis and/or the "bean counting" of naval order of battle. This practice usually shuts the door for the exchange of views with other services and civilians interested in maritime issues in general and SLOC security in particular. Overblown arguments are not uncommon, either. The possibility of military conflicts in the Taiwan Strait and over Senkakus/Diaoyudao, both of which lie in the way of the ROK's strategic Southwest Sea Lane—is being singled out as a case in point to create a task fleet. In reality, there is little, if any, possibility for the disputes to escalate to a war. Nor are there viable options for the ROK government to take in such contingencies—except maintaining the so-called "policy ambiguity."

In addition to the SLOC protections measures suggested above by navy personnel, it seems imperative to designate the part of the sea lanes as "essential protection areas," which are located close to the Korean home ports. They are designed to serve as an AOR for the ROKN, together with the assistance of the Korea Coast Guard. Beyond the "essential protection areas," there exist layers of wider areas that are protected jointly by the neighboring or combined-forces navies. As the regional states also hold important stakes in maintaining a safe SLOC, they are more than likely to be receptive to the joint efforts.

The multilateral coordination of this type will necessarily entail a broader scheme of things at the regional level. This should be regarded as a commendable effort linking Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, a sub-region whose security threats are maritime and multilateral in nature. An eventual growth of region-wide maritime regimes are in

essence in line with the call by Singapore's Defense Minister Teo Chee Hean for maritime principles or with Admiral Michael Mullen's espousal of the "1,000-ship Navy" for maritime security in the era of the "global maritime commons." They purport to increase the benefit of all countries involved with little cost.

Lastly, it goes without saying that underlying such endeavors must be a firmer maritime defense system between the U.S. and the ROK. For both peacetime and wartime, the U.S. Navy has proved and will prove to be the most reliable partner for SLOC security. By extension, it should be borne in mind that the ROKN's closer cooperation with the JMSDF is a critical aspect of the U.S. Navy's regional maritime security, which benefits the ROKN's SLOC protection efforts in wartime and peacetime. The above discussions call for a renewed effort on the part of the ROKN to secure the SLOCs in a systematic and realistic manner.

Note: All references cited here can be obtained from the author.



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